Commentary

Volume Sixty-four, Number Three, September 1977

The War Against the Atom
Samuel McCracken

Looting and Liberal Racism
Midge Decter

QUEBEC'S JEWS: CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE
Ruth R. Wisse & Irwin Cotler

ARE HUMAN RIGHTS UNIVERSAL? / Peter L. Berger

THE UNKNOWN CATACOMBS / Michael Ledeen

FICTION: Socialist Surrealism / Joshua Rubenstein

BOOKS: Nelson W. Polsby / Bernard Brodie / Leonard Bushkoff
Ronald Berman / Michael Novak / Marc Lee Raphael / Charles Horner

An Exchange on Nuclear Strategy / Richard Pipes & Critics

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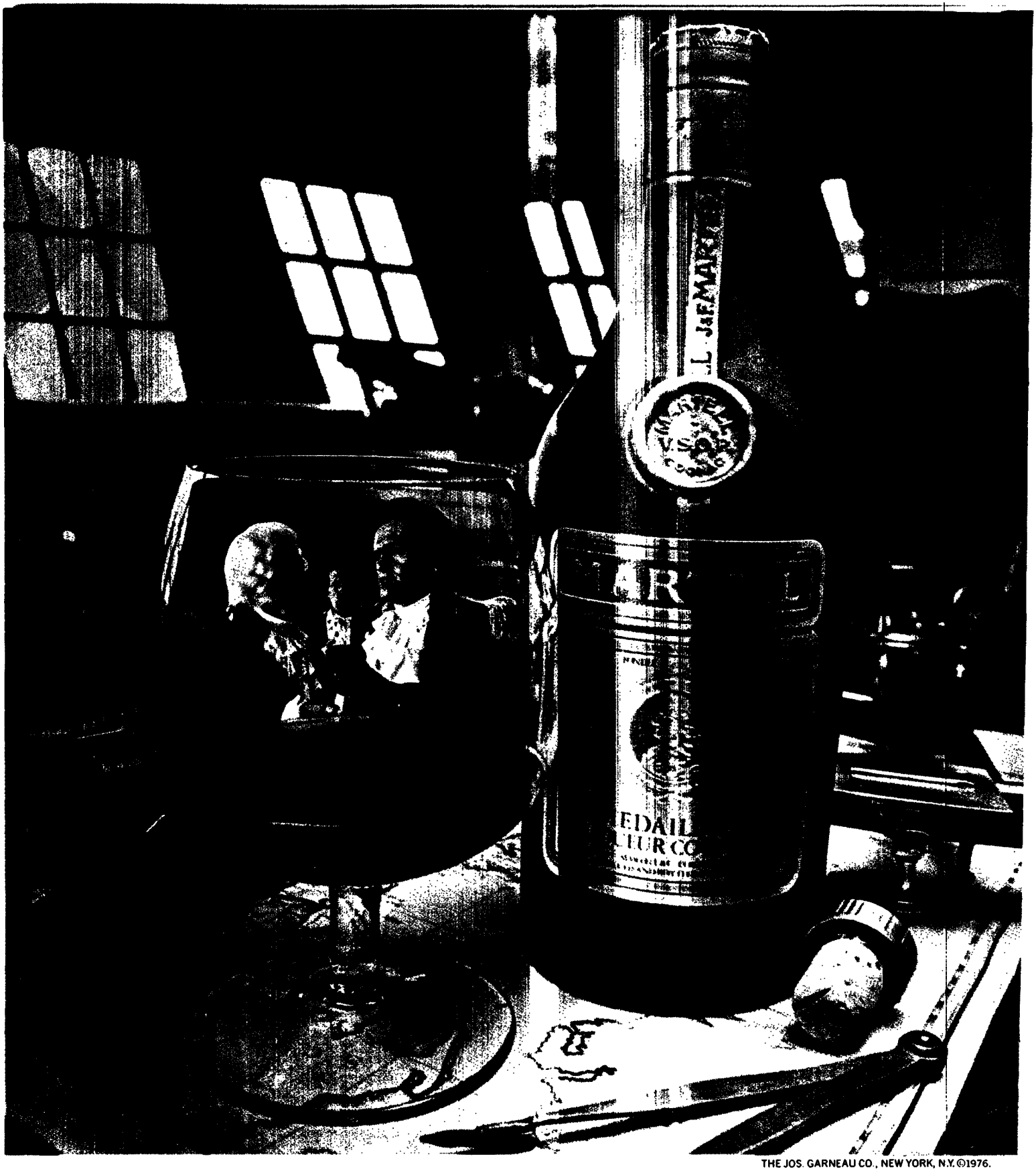

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Commentary

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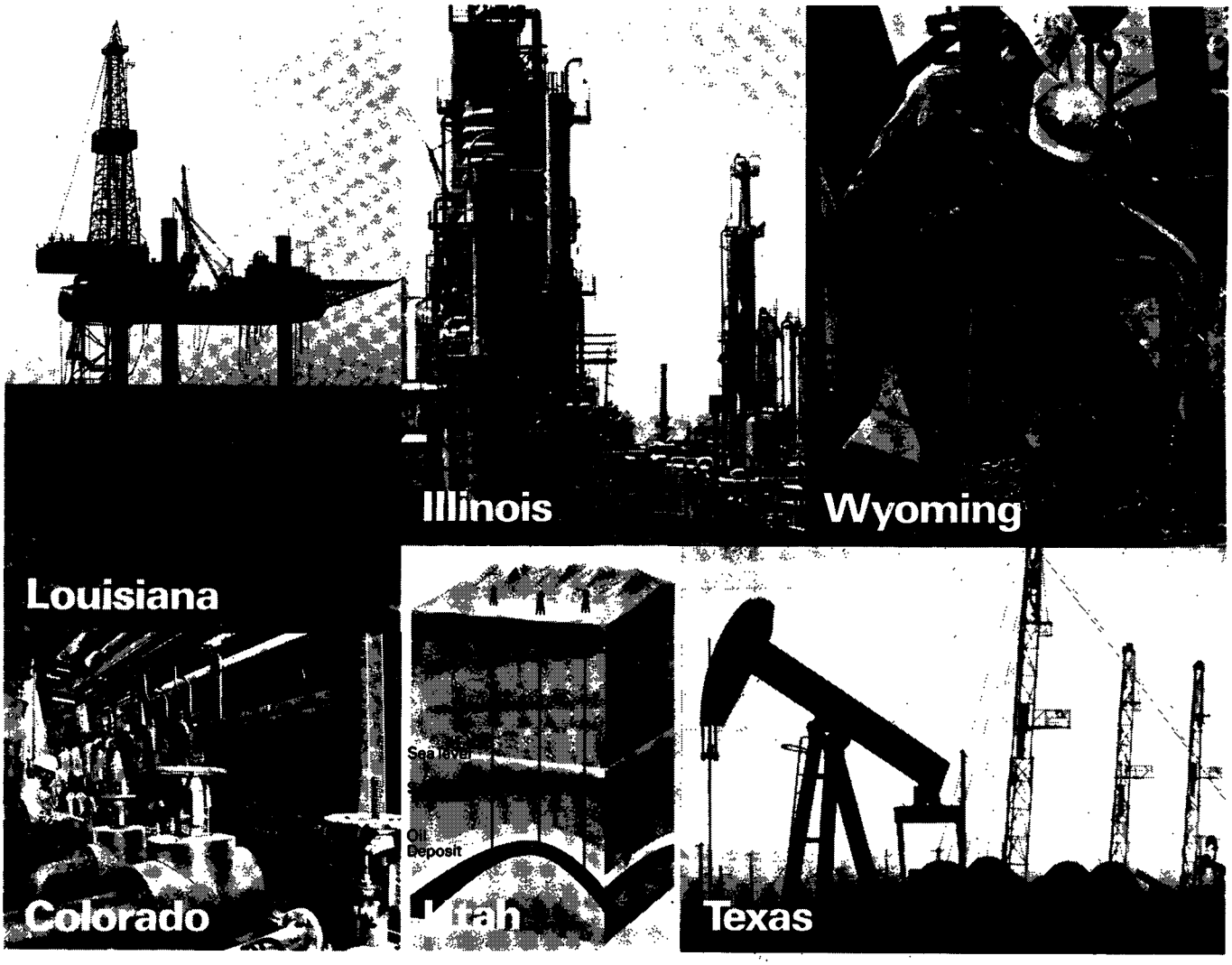

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Letters from Readers

Interpreting Soviet Nuclear Strategy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who has been involved in the U.S. Congress in SALT issues and defense appropriations, I have experienced the frustrations associated with any effort to have Soviet strategic doctrine and actual force structure taken seriously, as Richard Pipes has done in his article, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight & Win a Nuclear War" [July]. Soviet doctrine explicitly glorifies the offensive, explicitly states that the supremacy of the offensive is made mandatory by the advent of nuclear weapons, and explicitly states that the side committed to the defensive will be defeated. It would mean less if these doctrines were not reflected in the actual structure of Soviet forces, but they are. Soviet military forces comprise the most powerful offensive capability the world has ever seen. Yet we continue to hide this fact under euphemisms such as "defensive land-based power."

It is heartening that Richard Pipes could get a hearing in an intellectual publication. But it is disheartening that what he has to say needs a hearing. Why don't people already know? After all, it is not a new development. Could it be that the listening audience is already informed and that the others are immune? I believe this is so, and I believe that the answer to the question Mr. Pipes left unanswered explains why it is so.

Mr. Pipes does not explain why American strategic doctrine has developed in conscious neglect of Soviet strategic doctrine. I believe the answer is that our intellectuals, academics, and their policy-making students and fellow-traveling journalists cannot take Soviet strategic doctrine and force-structure seriously, because to do so would mean they would have to move out of their adversary role toward the U.S. Western intellectuals have a long tradition of relying on criticism of their own society as the means of achieving progress. This frame of mind explains their concessionary attitudes toward Communism, Third World demands, pornography, crime, poverty, and so forth—attitudes that puzzle the average American. Intellectuals and their policy-making students cannot listen to Mr. Pipes—or to the Russians—without changing their frame of mind, and to do this would leave them homeless. Who can imagine a Western intellectual in an affirmative stance toward his society? The West's morality is immanent in attacks on itself.

I predict that Mr. Pipes will achieve nothing other than to set himself up as a new bogeyman, a new target for the venting of moral fury. In fact, it has already started. Five days after the Washington *Post* carried excerpts from his COMMENTARY article, Mr. Pipes was attacked by a *Post* columnist who knows nothing whatsoever about the issue, as a member of "the military-intellectual complex" who spreads "rank hysteria in scholarly garb." The columnist went on to say that "Pipes and others of his stripe, such as Paul Nitze" are driven by devils.

I could have warned him. On June 16, 1976, Congressman Jack Kemp, a member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and one of the few Congressmen who has bothered to learn about SALT issues and Soviet strategic doctrine, made a speech in the House of Representatives along the same lines as Mr. Pipes's article. Staff members of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee responded by sending him an article about Congressmen who show "bristling vigilance in the face of a supposed external danger." This is the subcommittee that is chaired by George Mahon, the dean of the House, who is known as Mr. Defense. If this is the staff attitude in this pro-defense subcommittee, you can imagine what it is like elsewhere.

What does it all mean? It means, perhaps, that henceforth American foreign policy will consist of accommodating the Russians and presenting such accommodation to the American people as successful diplomacy in building a new world order. The stage is set for a new brand of American politician, one who competes for office by escalating concessions to the Russians. The line will be that world peace will be endangered unless we give up . . . and that there is no room for prideful, selfish national interests in a nuclear age. Already Congress hears testimony from our leading academic centers about the

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need for "concessionary transfers" and "cultivating a disposition of forthcomingness." Is the West already under the Soviet thumb?

The U.S. has relied for so long on a self-critical posture as its means of achieving progress that it naturally and unthinkingly has adopted this stance in its relations with its external enemies. Even if some Soviet action were to shake this attitude, the U.S. may already be too far behind in the momentum of offensive and defensive capability for the Russians to allow us to redress the balance.

What to do about the Russians is becoming a moot question. Tomorrow the relevant question may be: what will they do to us?

PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Richard Pipes's claim that while the U.S. regards all-out nuclear war as a horror beyond imagination, the Soviets consider it as a logical extension of the diplomatic note, I am left with two questions.

First, why examine words rather than actions? Consider the following indicators of willingness to resort to war: shooting wars fought closer to the rival superpower than to home; use of nuclear threats in crises; introduction of major advances in nuclear first-strike capability; nuclear capability ready for launch at an instant's notice; total nuclear first-strike capability deployed. By every one of these measures, our own actions have been, and are, considerably more impressive than the Soviet Union's. This is not to say that our nation does not in fact abhor war. But it does suggest that, should Mr. Pipes's counterpart in the Soviet Union wish to argue, "Comrades, we must understand the Americans don't think as we do; they have not experienced the ravages of war as we have; their every action demonstrates a willingness to use force at any time to achieve their ends," he will have better basic material on which to build his case than does Mr. Pipes. The value of strategists on either side gathering around the campfire at night telling goblin stories is, of course, dubious.

Second, why, at this late date, should Soviet intentions be of such concern to us? Mr. Pipes may well be correct that "Soviet military theorists reject the notion that technology (i.e., weapons) decides strategy." But they *cannot* escape the fact that technology *limits* strategy; there is no use adopting a strategy when one lacks the ability to execute it. When Mr. Pipes tells us the Soviets will do us in if they can, he is merely rediscovering the wheel, and in 1977 this hardly merits a Nobel Prize. For three decades the central thrusts of our military and foreign policies have been to insure that, regardless of Soviet intentions, they will clearly *lack* the ability to do us in without suffering unacceptable retaliation. As long as we retain the necessary retaliatory capabilities—the recent decision to go with the cruise missile instead of the B-1 is a major step in this direction—what the Soviets would do if they could remains an academic exercise, because they can't.

[Congressman] THOMAS J. DOWNEY
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, Richard Pipes twice cites my work, with quotations, to illustrate my malign influence on American strategic thinking. The first of these citations is a passage which I wrote within weeks of the nuclear explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki and which I subsequently included in a book that also contained some chapters written by my then colleagues at Yale. Here Mr. Pipes at least quotes me correctly to the effect that henceforward the American military establishment must be conceived as existing primarily for the sake of averting wars rather than winning them, a statement which I would not today retract or significantly modify except to make clear that I was of course applying that idea only to the kind of war we would think of as major, as with the Soviet Union, which is also the kind of war that Mr. Pipes is writing about.

He is quite wrong, however, in suggesting that the book (*The Absolute Weapon,* 1946) from which he quotes my statements and those of my co-authors was inspired "by strong pacifist convictions and . . . deep guilt at having participated in the creation of a weapon of such destructive power." None of us had any part in the creation of atomic weapons, nor were we in the slightest degree participants in any collective guilt sharing. Moreover, most of our professional colleagues regarded us as rather the opposite of pacifists. And insofar as Mr. Pipes takes us to task for having reached our conclusions "without much reference to the analysis of the effects of atomic weapons carried out by the military," to the slight extent that such analysis existed at the time, it was simply ludicrous. So, by the way, is Mr. Pipes's contention that "consideration of the traditional principles of warfare" might have preserved us from error. Also, though Mr. Pipes refers to us as "a group of civilian strategic theorists," he ought to know that none besides myself was at all regarded as such by himself or by others.

Concerning his second citation, which contains a pair of quotations from me from a later book, though nevertheless one written almost twenty years ago, here is how Mr. Pipes puts it:

> *Strategy in the Missile Age,* an influential work by Bernard Brodie . . . which originally came out in 1959, and was republished in 1965, makes only a few offhand allusions to Soviet nuclear strategy, and then either to note with approval that it is "developing along lines familiar in the United States" (p. 171), or else, when the Russians prefer to follow their own track, to dismiss it as a "ridiculous and reckless fantasy" (p. 215).

I am grateful to Mr. Pipes for inserting the page numbers. On page 215 of my book I did indeed find the words "ridiculous and reckless fantasy," but in reference clearly to American and not Soviet thinking. True, in the footnote appended to the end of the long paragraph containing this phrase I add: "Fortunately for us, this tendency is at least as common in the Soviet Union as in the United States," and cite as my sources the work of Raymond L. Garthoff and Oleg Hoeffding, both well-known Sovietologists. The first edition of Marshal Sokolovskii's work on Soviet strategic thinking, which Mr. Pipes takes me to task for not probing seriously, was not published until 1962, three years after my book, and contrary to Mr. Pipes's statement, my book was not "republished" in 1965 but simply reissued in a paperback version. As any scholar would, Mr. Pipes understands very well the difference between a new edition, which is expected to contain important

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revisions, and a simple reprinting or reissue. Anyway, the notion seems to me odd that one cannot say anything about what American military policy ought to be without referring everlastingly to what the Russians think. After all, Mr. Pipes is implicitly praising the Russians for preferring "to follow their own track." Perhaps we ought to also.

What Mr. Pipes takes from my page 171 is literally correct in that I use the words he quotes, though I apply them to a much narrower area of Soviet thinking than he implies. My words are: "Soviet ideas on what can be accomplished, for example by surprise nuclear attack, seem to be developing along lines familiar in the United States" (citing as my source the work of Herbert S. Dinerstein). The view I express in that sentence was certainly correct for the time my book was published, and I might add it is roughly correct even today. If Mr. Pipes would read the publicly expressed views of the American military as assiduously as he reads those of the Soviet military, he would find that there is really nothing as novel or distinctive about the latter. In any case, in neither the United States nor the Soviet Union will the ultimate decisions about war and peace or the use of nuclear weapons be made by the military, and what I find truly remarkable about Mr. Pipes's article is that he nowhere seems to think it necessary to probe the relevant thoughts of top Soviet *political* leaders.

There are many other dubious statements in the article, but for reasons of space I shall confine myself to one, to which Mr. Pipes seems to attach central importance. He finds it extraordinarily significant that the Russians believe that "the basic function of warfare, as defined by Clausewitz, remains permanently valid," and he quotes Sokolovskii to that effect with his own added emphasis: " 'It is well known that the essential nature of *war as a continuation of politics does not change with changing technology and armament.*' " Well, who thinks otherwise? There is nothing at all remarkable in Sokolovskii's assertion—which could, in fact, be simply rote—so long as one knows what Clausewitz meant in that famous phrase about war being a continuation of politics. That meaning he developed at length in Books I and VIII of *On War,* and in essence it amounts to the idea that war would be only senseless destruction if it were not in pursuit of some valid political objective. Clausewitz went on to argue that the political objective must therefore dominate the strategy of a war, and it is this latter point that the military of all nations—German, American, and I don't doubt Russian—have found it difficult to accept, just as they have found it difficult to accept certain other Clausewitzian tenets, such as that "defense is the stronger form of war." If Marshal Sokolovskii thinks that war can in some meaningful sense be won even in an all-out strategic exchange of nuclear weapons, then I can assure both him and Mr. Pipes that myriads of American military men (and many civilians) think the same. I happen to think otherwise, precisely *because* I accept the basic Clausewitzian principle that war can make no sense unless it is in pursuit of a meaningful political objective, which objective should then dominate the strategy. Incidentally, the first half of my most recent book (*War and Politics,* 1973) is devoted to supporting and developing precisely this point, as is my introductory chapter to the recently published translation, by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, of Clausewitz's great work.

I find it difficult indeed to conceive of a political motive that would justify the *initiation* of a war which had a significant probability of going into a strategic nuclear exchange. So, I believe, do the Soviet political leaders. Mr. Pipes, despite his expertise in Russian history and his chairmanship of that famous "Team B" which obliged the CIA to revise its estimates of Soviet intentions, has not succeeded in persuading us otherwise. In fact, in no serious way has he even tried to do so.

BERNARD BRODIE
Pacific Palisades, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Pipes would have his readers believe that the Soviet leadership pretends that a nuclear war would destroy only the capitalist half of the world, which is of course arrant nonsense. He further states that the Soviets view a nuclear confrontation as "feasible and winnable," and in so arguing willfully ignores Soviet statements to the contrary. President and party leader Brezhnev has repeatedly stressed that "mankind would be fully destroyed" in a nuclear exchange, and this view has been echoed by his Politburo colleagues. Mr. Pipes also conveniently ignores the fact that the decisions regarding the use of nuclear weapons would be made by the political leaders in the Politburo and not by the general officers of the high command immersed in military doctrine. A Politburo concerned with protecting its own power would probably not agree with Mr. Pipes's view that there is no significant difference between terrorist bombs and nuclear war.

Mr. Pipes's distorted argument suffers from the complete absence of examination of Soviet views that dramatically underscore the danger of nuclear weapons and the need for measures to limit strategic weaponry. In addition to Brezhnev's remarks in Bucharest last winter, even prominent Soviet military writers have noted the futility of additional strategic deployments. General Simonyan wrote in *Pravda* only in June that both the U.S. and the USSR had weapons "capable of destroying many times over all life on earth," and that new armaments would not bring "any substantial military—and, even less, political—advantage." A similar argument was made last winter by one of the more conservative Soviet military writers, Colonel Rybkin, in the lead article of the organ of the USSR's Institute of Military History. Rybkin also repeated Brezhnev's observation in Poland last summer on the destructiveness of nuclear weaponry.

The director of the influential USA Institute, Georgy Arbatov, wrote in 1974 that there can be no political profit from a nuclear war since "no policy can have the objective of destroying the enemy at the cost of self-annihilation." More recently, these remarks were echoed in the most prestigious Soviet party journal—where only the approved party line is usually allowed—by a retired general officer who is now a senior staff member of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations.

What is even more reprehensible for a so-called objective scholar is Mr. Pipes's distortion of easily available Soviet population figures in order to argue that the USSR is "less vulnerable" to attack. He cites only nine Soviet cities with a population over a million which contain 8.5 per cent of the total population, whereas the 1975

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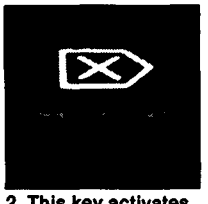
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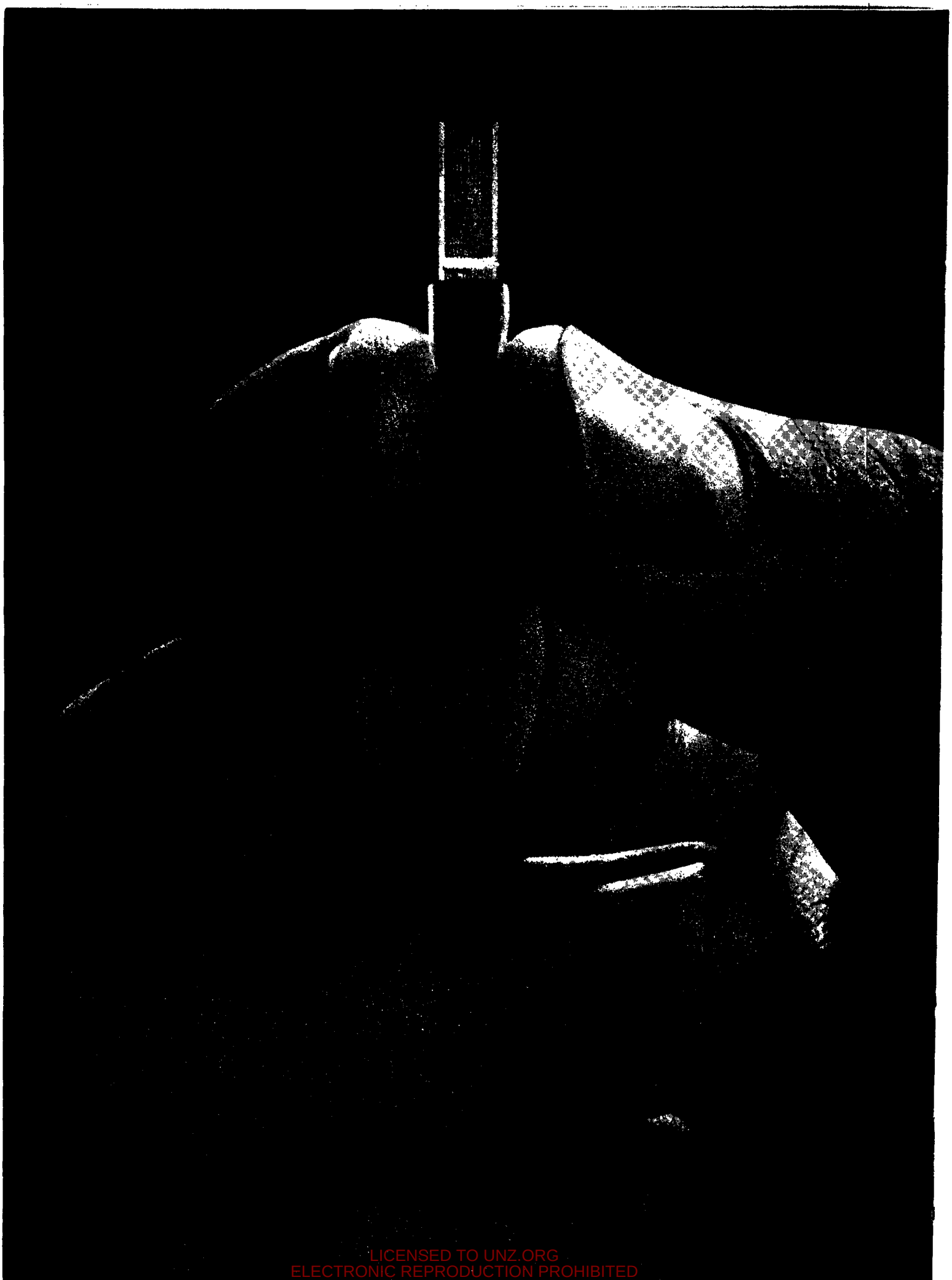

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Narkhoz (the USSR's annual statistical handbook) reports fourteen cities with a population of more than a million each in addition to fifteen cities with more than 750,000 population, which adds up to more than 41 million people in key urban areas that represent more than 16 per cent of the total population. As Professor Henry Morton has wisely observed, these large Soviet cities contain the major industrial and scientific research centers in the country and make Soviet cities even more vulnerable than their American counterparts.

MELVIN A. GOODMAN
Bethesda, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Richard Pipes has sound views regarding the Soviet threat and presents much useful information, his article contains many factual errors and doubtful interpretations which could mislead the reader and perhaps discredit the cause he seeks to support. . . .

Mr. Pipes writes that the American strategic community relies on a doctrine of mutual deterrence, or the belief that we only need sufficient strategic power to impose unacceptable damage on the Soviet Union and we can therefore ignore the relative strengths of the Soviet Union and the U.S. According to the theory of mutual deterrence, the Soviets have been merely catching up with the U.S. strategic lead and will not build up further once parity is achieved. But, in fact, this position is not the universal U.S. theory or doctrine, but is merely one school of thought, represented principally in the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and in academia. It is an important school, perhaps too important, but it is not the only one or even the dominant one.

Mr. Pipes briefly mentions but hardly gives sufficient space to the defense and war-fighting emphasizers, such as Albert Wohlstetter, Herman Kahn, and Paul Nitze (and Donald G. Brennan, Edward Teller, Eugene Wigner, and a large body of analysts in and outside the government who can be identified by their support of ABM in 1969). This formidable school . . . is powerfully represented in the Pentagon, and among Pentagon contractors and research organizations ("think tanks").

However, what is perhaps the dominant school of American strategic thought is not mentioned by Mr. Pipes at all—those who have no delusions about Soviet intentions and who would rely almost entirely on deterrence, a concept which Mr. Pipes does not adequately explain. Deterrence is a credible threat of retaliation, of imposing an unacceptable level of damage. The word "credible" is central here, and is the principal argument for U.S. strategic superiority. As pointed out by Mr. Pipes, if the Soviets can retaliate against us at a much more devastating level, our threats to them are not believable. Defense and war-fighting capabilities are not contrary to deterrence, as Mr. Pipes indicates; they improve deterrence.

There is much debate within the strategic community over what it takes to make a threat credible and what level of damage will deter the Russians. Mr. Pipes calls attention to the much quoted fact that the Soviet Union was able to bear 30 million dead . . . during World War II. This datum is the beginning of analysis, but the following must also be considered:

1. In 1941 the Soviet Union did not make a conscious decision to endure 30 million casualties. It suffered an unprovoked attack by an ally which shortly made clear its intention to exterminate the Soviet ruling class and turn greater Russia into one vast Gulag.

2. During the period 1945-65, when our striking power was less than it is today, the Russians apparently were deterred. It certainly was not the strength of the U.S. army that encouraged the Soviets to back down in the Berlin crisis of 1949.

3. The Soviets have changed since 1941-45, and do not appear to be as tough or as tough-minded as they were then.

4. Most important, even if the Soviets could bear 30 million or 50 million or 80 million dead in a nuclear war, there must be some level of destruction that would deter them, even if it were the annihilation of their entire population.

Issues of how much killing and by what means dominate discussions of U.S. nuclear strategy, not the obsessions with the abstract concepts of mutual deterrence depicted by Mr. Pipes.

Now let us consider Mr. Pipes's interpretations of Soviet strategic intentions. While it is interesting to note the doctrine expressed in Soviet military publications, there is a much stronger case than Mr. Pipes admits for not taking this material too seriously. . . .

This Soviet military material reveals a primitive view of the world which may sicken the reader, but he may be just as appalled at the literary products of the U.S. military. . . . Yes, the military is stronger in Russia than in the U.S. Yes, it is properly characterized as a "state within a state," but . . . other players are involved in the decision-making game. . . .

I do not think that we need to believe that the Soviet leadership is so insane as to be planning to "win" a thermonuclear war. . . . It would seem reasonable that the Russians seek nuclear superiority in order to be the dominant country, to be in a position where the U.S. will back down in the inevitable crises. The Soviet arms build-up and civil-defense preparations are the means of making their deterrence more credible to us. Henry Kissinger is reported to have asked, "What is superiority good for?" Superiority is to make the other side knuckle under. This is what we need fear from the Soviets, not some crackpot schemes for fighting thermonuclear wars. Indeed, Marxist doctrine holds that the decadent bourgeois West will fall into the laps of the Communist East, and there is considerable recent empirical evidence to support that forecast.

IF MY characterization of U.S. strategic thought is correct, and my speculations about Soviet motives are plausible, why are my views so different from those of Mr. Pipes? There are two possible reasons.

The first is that he is not as well informed in this area as he might be. This is suggested by numerous trivial errors of fact. Contrary to his statements, the U.S. *does* have general staffs, and though the U.S. grants no higher degrees in "military science," we have a vast complex of war colleges, of somewhat doubtful utility. According to Mr. Pipes, we have produced no "strategists of international repute," except for Mahan, one of the not more than ten such strategists. Who is the equivalent Russian? One must also assume that Mr. Pipes believes that only military officers can be strategists—but what of Wohlstetter and Kahn? . . .

Contrary to Mr. Pipes, the Soviets *did* bomb German cities in World War II—they did not bomb them more frequently because their air force, like all air forces except

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those of insular Britain and the U.S., were designed and equipped for army and naval support.

U.S. military doctrine in the immediate World War II period, that nuclear bombs made little difference, was not based upon any sort of intellectual theory, but upon the objective conditions of the time—we had very few bombs and few bombers capable of delivering them. . . .

Mr. Pipes's scorn for the use of "fiscal imperatives" in defense planning is odd. How best to deploy one's necessarily limited resources has always been the central problem of military planning, even during periods of "total war."

Mr. Pipes's claim that American "civil defense was all but abandoned" is an insult to the devoted men who have been laboring for the last generation to improve our domestic defense. It is true that U.S. civil defense is by no means at the Soviet level and should be expanded, but it is a remarkable example of what can be achieved even with limited resources. Perhaps Mr. Pipes has been misled by the lack of publicity given to these endeavors. . . .

Particularly annoying is Mr. Pipes's reference to U.S. "intent" in his response to a student's question about "overkill." . . . In fact, overkill is a technical issue. We need enough weapons to destroy the Soviet Union many times over because prudent planning requires that sufficient weapons survive to destroy Russia after an initial Soviet attack has knocked out a significant number of weapons. In addition, of the surviving weapons, some may fail to launch, others may be intercepted in flight, still others may miss or fail to explode; we must also retain a reserve to deal with the Chinese or any other international scavengers. . . .

The statement that the Soviets "possess a considerably larger arsenal . . . of strategic nuclear weapons" is not supported in any credible published source, and is, indeed, incredible and dangerously defeatist.

Perhaps the above requires special information, but the lay reader can detect places where Mr. Pipes's enthusiasm has outstripped his argument. He tells us that the armed forces of the Soviet Union must be huge to hold down the greater Russian empire and therefore a mutual-deterrence doctrine which would permit smaller strategic forces is unacceptable. The converse is true: spending less on strategic forces would permit a larger investment in security apparatus, not to mention "butter" to appease popular demands. . . .

ALL these things aside, however, there is a second possible explanation for Mr. Pipes's position: . . . Mr. Pipes's near slander of the competence of civilian analysts and his frequent references to the "military professional" reflect the long-held resentment of serving officers at the interjection of civilian "whiz kids" into the defense-planning apparatus. Mr. Pipes's article might be described as a sophisticated version of the views of a red-neck colonel. . . .

Mr. Pipes's citation of Senator Moynihan's advocacy of not being ashamed to be frightened is appropriate. We should not be afraid to fear, but we should be afraid of being hysterical. The Soviets are intelligent and resourceful adversaries; they are neither primitive nor crazy, nor are we (or most of us) stupid. With a reasonable (and not unreasonably expensive) expansion of our offensive and defensive strategic forces, we can achieve the technological and numerical superiority more than sufficient to deter any aggressive designs on their part. *That* is a strategy—a strategy for defense of our national interests, values, and allies, and a strategy for peace.

B. BRUCE-BRIGGS
Fort Lee, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Many readers of COMMENTARY will probably address themselves to the argument and data Richard Pipes has used to prove at least to his satisfaction that the Soviet Union thinks it can fight and win a nuclear war. My own concern is less with Mr. Pipes's analysis of Soviet military doctrine, vulnerable as this analysis may be, than with the kind of madness which drives men to believe—on the assumption the enemy holds the identical belief—that the annihilation of millions of human beings in a nuclear war can be a morally tenable position.

"Such figures are beyond the comprehension of most Americans," writes Mr. Pipes. Perhaps. But mass murder should not be beyond the comprehension of those of us who have lived through the era of the Nazi Holocaust. What I cannot comprehend is how anyone with the faintest pretense to ethical values can spend some 15,000 words discussing the logistics of nuclear war without the slightest reference to the moral issues involved.

In his ostensibly value-free analysis, Mr. Pipes in fact goes beyond a mere discussion of Soviet intentions, for the clear implication of his assessment is that the United States cannot escape the necessity of launching a preemptive strike. According to Mr. Pipes, Soviet military doctrine calls for "not deterrence but victory . . . not retaliation but offensive action." He adds, "The costliest lesson which the Soviet military learned in World War II was the importance of surprise. . . . Given the rapidity of modern warfare . . . not to be surprised by the enemy means, in effect, to inflict surprise on him." If this is so, the ineluctable implication is that the United States must be prepared to inflict surprise on the USSR. All that remains to decide is when. Presumably, whenever we are ready. Since Mr. Pipes doesn't trouble to indicate what, if any, restraints might be placed upon a preemptive strike, how can we "make it impossible for them [the enemy] to succeed" except by means of such an attack?

But if we initiate the attack, on Mr. Pipes's assumption that if we don't, the USSR will, and if in the process we destroy 20.5 or 30 or 40 million Russians—how pleasantly abstract these statistics can be!—in what sense are we significantly different from the enemy? And what if Mr. Pipes turns out to be mistaken—if the USSR has no intention of attempting a preemptive strike? Having failed to perceive this in time, having endorsed Mr. Pipes's thesis and proceeded with our preemptive strike, don't we become culpable of a moral atrocity without historical precedent? (I assume, of course, that even Mr. Pipes would agree that the wanton destruction of millions of our fellow creatures, loyal Communists as well as dissidents, would constitute an appalling and brutal act.)

Confronted with this moral dilemma, we are unfortunately left with the mutual-deterrence doctrine as the only practicable solution. I say "unfortunately" because the pacifist solution is still beyond the comprehension of the vast majority of Americans, including Mr. Pipes, who speaks of the "strong pacifist convictions" of those responsible for "the principles of the mu-

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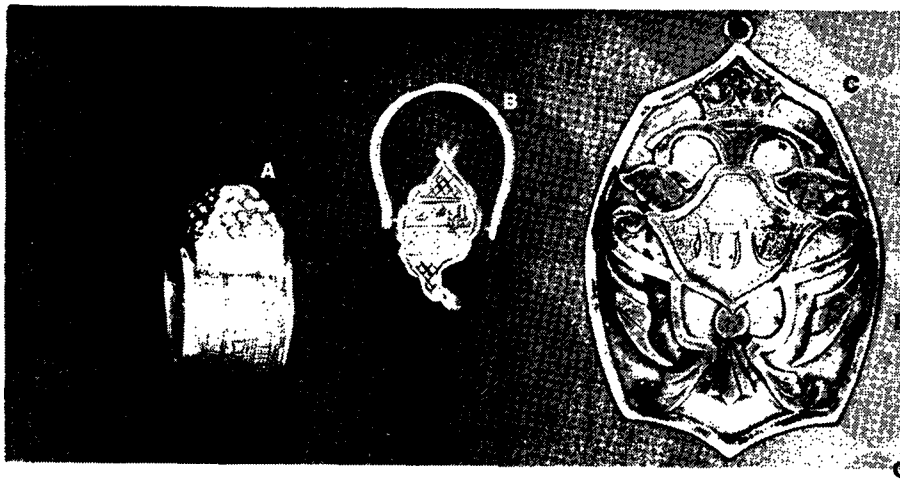

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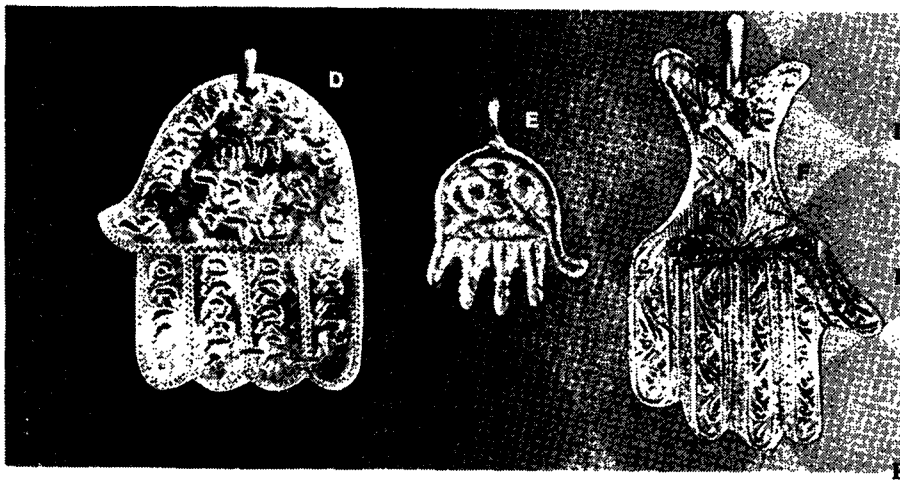

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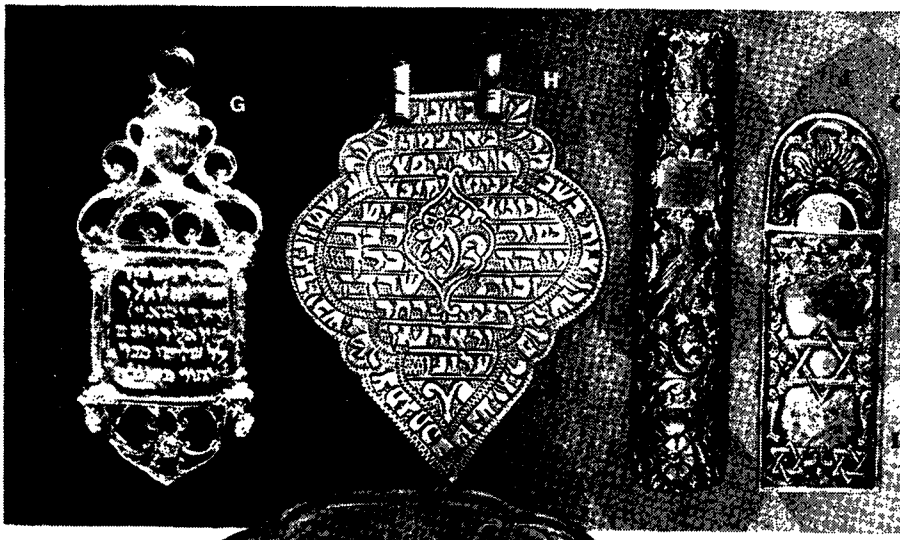

G. 17th Century Italian Amulet. Set in a graceful architectural frame with columns and swirls, this amulet was worn as jewelry, or hung in a room, to provide protection against sickness and bad luck. 4" x 1¾".

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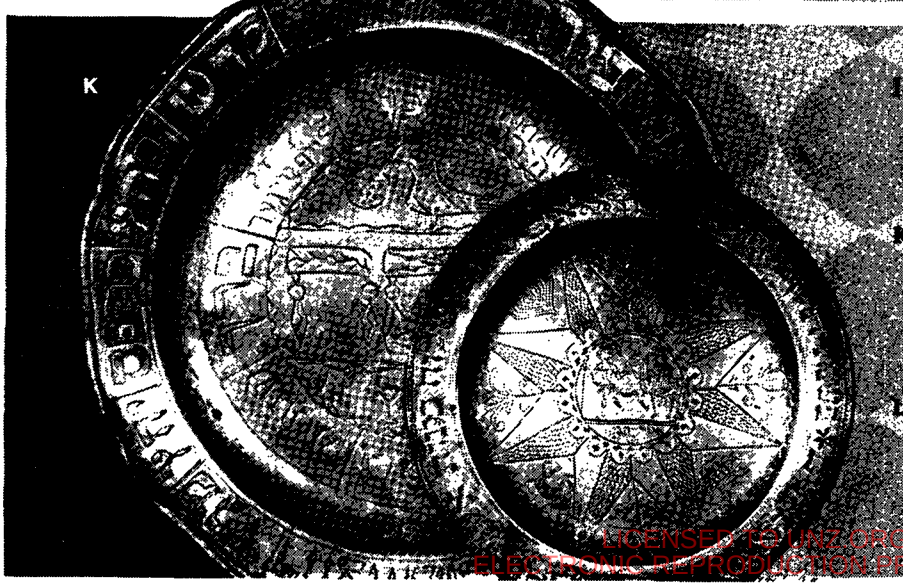

J. 19th Century German Mezuzah. Decorated with the Star of David and a flame which represents divine light. 3½" x 1⅜".

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K. 18th Century Passover Plate. Decorated with a bird holding a matzah in its mouth. The order of the Seder is engraved around the rim, and the word "Pesach" is in the center. 13" diameter.

No. 109 . . . Pewter—$75.00

L. 18th Century European Purim Plate. Decorated by a Jewish folk artist, it features a center engraving of Mordechai being led on a horse by the evil Haman, and a Hebrew inscription around the rim from the Book of Esther. 8¾" diameter.

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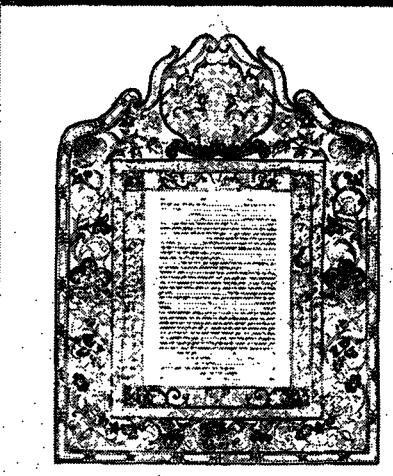
M. Augsburg Kiddush Cup. Engraved and decorated in Augsburg, Germany, in 1791. The Hebrew inscription identifies this as a cup which held the wine blessed and shared by the family on festivals such as Sukkot and Shavuot. 3¾" x 5".

No. 115 . . . Silver Plated—$65.00



N. 18th Century Ketubah. The original of this magnificent Ketubah, or marriage contract, was painted on parchment in Trieste, Italy, in 1775. The multi-colored reproduction is available in two forms: with the authorized text of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and blank, for those who wish to have a Ketubah with the Orthodox text or those who wish to write their own marriage contract. 19" x 25".

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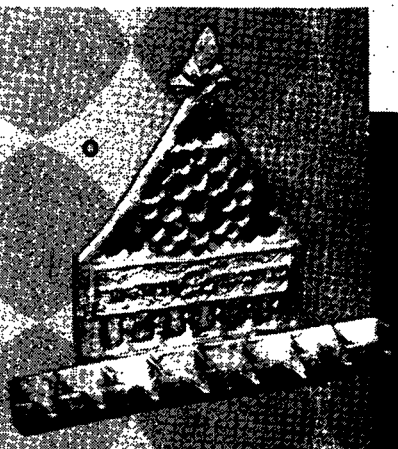

O. Medieval Hanukkah Lamp. Dating from the 12th to 14th century, this lamp burns oil with wicks. It is fashioned in the style of a Gothic cathedral with a rose window. The architectural back is meant to represent the Temple in Jerusalem. 6" x 6½".

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tual-deterrence theory which subsequently became the official U.S. strategic doctrine." For anyone associated with the pacifist movement in America—with the Quakers, the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the War Resisters League, to name but a few of the established pacifist groups in this country—Mr. Pipes's characterization is egregious nonsense. Mutual-deterrence doctrine is abhorrent to pacifists and ultimately as futile as, if somewhat less obviously immoral than, the doctrine of the preemptive strike. But as long as Americans are unprepared to think the unthinkable—which is to say an America willing to accept the considerable risks of total, unilateral disarmament rather than the awful certainties of nuclear war—we must, I suppose, reconcile ourselves to a world that will continue to teeter on the brink of universal disaster. Even this seems preferable to the dehumanized fate that Mr. Pipes's thesis promise all of us.

IRWIN STARK

Hillsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Pipes's conclusions as to Soviet strategy rely mainly on published theoretical writings of Soviet military officers. Such sources are dubious footholds for the far-reaching theses he presents. The ideas of military officers do not necessarily reflect the convictions of political leaders.

Still, a careful reading of these sources indicates serious distortion by Mr. Pipes.... [He] misreads both Soviet military strategy and Clausewitz. The connection that Soviet strategists make between war and politics is summed up in the fifth edition of *Marxism-Leninism On War & Army* (1972), an official publication written by a group of eminent Soviet military scholars and officers: "Politics will determine when the armed struggle is to be started and what means to be employed. Nuclear war cannot emerge from nowhere, out of a vacuum, by itself. . . ." In general,

> war cannot be understood without first understanding its connection with the policies preceding it. . . . The political interests of the classes at war and of their states determine the war *aims*, while armed struggle is the *means* of achieving these aims. . . . War is the continuation of the politics of definite classes and states (conditions) by violent means.

The point is obvious... not so scary.

Soviets criticize American nuclear-war doctrine on similar grounds: "The bourgeois ideologists," says *Marxism-Leninism* . . . , "do all they can to confuse and distort the question about the sources of wars, their nature, social and class essence." According to Marxist doctrine, modern wars are the product of "the aggressive forces of imperialism," meaning, today, the U.S. and its allies. Thus, "By their arguments, the bourgeois theoreticians, consciously or unconsciously, attempt to divorce the nuclear-missile war under preparation from the aggressive policies of imperialism." They "conceal who is responsible for imperialist aggression."

Some Soviet writers do say, as Mr. Pipes points out, that a nuclear war is "winnable." But this is usually not meant in a strictly military sense. It is clear from all Soviet literature that they believe, or at least say, that U.S. imperialism will be the force that starts a nuclear war. Thus, the Soviets write that the masses will unite against such aggression, taking "decisive, anti-imperialist actions . . . political, diplomatic, international-legal, ideological, and other actions against those responsible for unleashing a nuclear adventure."

Further, Mr. Pipes ignores the historical context of such remarks. As Harriet Fast Scott, the American translator of Sokolovskii's work, points out, many articles proclaiming that nuclear war is winnable were "prompted by Communist Chinese accusations of revisionism."

All of these Soviet documents may be pure nonsense and propaganda. But taken in their full context, they certainly do not suggest that the Soviets are about to declare a nuclear war....

Mr. Pipes misreads Clausewitz as well. He ignores the warrior-philosopher's central point:

> As war is no act of blind passion, but is dominated by the political object, therefore the value of that object determines the measure of the sacrifice by which it is to be purchased. . . . No war shall be commenced . . . without first seeking a reply to the question, What is to be attained by and in the same? The first is the final object: the other is the intermediate aim. By this chief consideration, the whole course of the war is prescribed, the extent of the means and the measure of energy are determined.

The authors of *Marxism-Leninism* . . . echo this theme: "The scale and intensity of wars are determined first of all by the political aims."

MR. PIPES does not provide a credible scenario in which the Soviets would risk a chance of a nuclear attack upon their territory, nor does he think up a political goal whose gain would be worth the sacrifice of possible American nuclear retaliation. Instead, he argues that the Soviets would not mind sacrificing 30 million lives in a nuclear war; that they, after all, lost 20 million in World War II. Aside from the fact that far more than 30 million would die, even with civil-defense measures, several points must be made.

First, the Soviets did not enter World War II knowing that 20 million Russians would die in battle. Second, the deaths were spread out over four years, not thirty minutes. Third, the alternative in World War II was a Nazi terror that promised to occupy everything west of the Urals, kill millions of Russians, and enslave the rest. Fourth, the Soviets were able to save much of their industrial base by transporting it eastward as the Nazis started plowing through Russian territory; in a nuclear war, for which there would be little warning and during which targets all across the country would probably be blasted, this would not be possible.

Finally, Mr. Pipes's claim that the USSR emerged from World War II "stronger politically and militarily than it had ever been" is outrageous falsehood....

Still, Mr. Pipes maintains that a nuclear war might not be so devastating. After all, the trains in Hiroshima were running forty-eight hours after the blast; several buildings were left standing; and Germany was, in the course of World War II, hit with 400 "Hiroshimas" and could still carry out a war.

This is highly misleading. First, P.M.S. Blackett, whom Mr. Pipes uses as a source who downplayed the meaningfulness of atomic weapons, changed his mind dramatically after the first H-bomb test. Second, a comparison of nuclear with conventional blasts ignores the effects of radiation, fallout, firestorms, and so on.

Third, the Hiroshima bomb was only 14 kilotons; only one-third of the city was devastated. The smallest warhead in the U.S. strategic nu-

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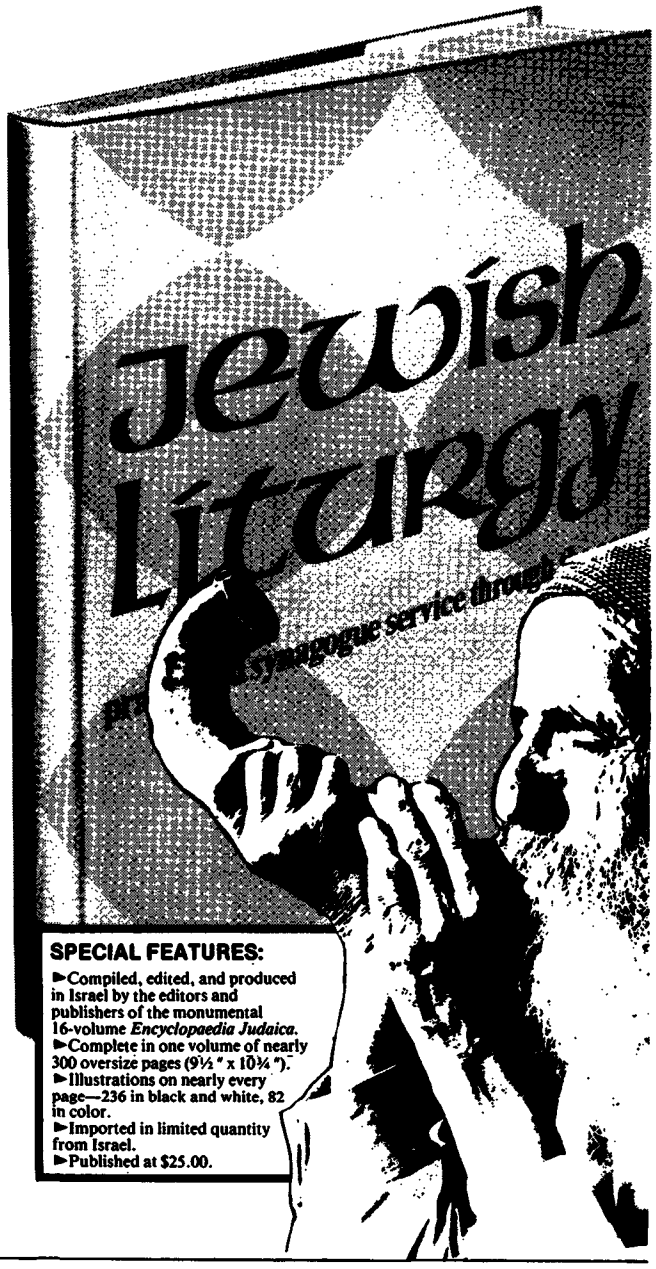

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clear arsenal today is that of the Poseidon, with 40 kilotons. Just one-sixth of the U.S. nuclear-missile submarine force—7 submarines—each loaded with 160 warheads, could thoroughly destroy all 220 Soviet cities with populations greater than 100,000.

This seems to be recognized by the USSR's *political* leaders, whom, curiously, Mr. Pipes does not quote. Leonid Brezhnev told the Polish Sejma: "In recent years such a mass of weapons has been accumulated which makes possible the destruction of all life on earth several times." At the thirtieth anniversary celebration of the Great Patriotic War Victory, he declared that "the starting of a nuclear-missile war would spell inevitable annihilation for the aggressor himself, to say nothing of the vast losses for many other countries perhaps not even formally involved in the war."

Even Marshal Sokolovskii wrote: "The losses in a world nuclear war will not only be suffered by the U.S. and its NATO allies, but also by the socialist countries. . . . Many hundreds of millions of people would perish, and most of those remaining alive . . . would be subject to radioactive contamination." . . .

Mr. Pipes is alarmed that the Soviets have a "counterforce" strategy. But what is one to make of the U.S. development of the Mark-12-A warhead (350 kilotons with accuracies less than one-tenth of a mile c.e.p.); of elaborate anti-submarine warfare research and development; of the increasing accuracy of missiles, both ICBM's and SLBM's; of this statement from the FY 1978 posture statement:

> We believe that a substantial number of military forces and critical industries in the Soviet Union should be directly targeted, and that an important objective of the assured retaliatory mission should be to significantly retard the ability of the USSR to recover from a nuclear exchange and regain the status of a 20th-century military and industrial power more rapidly than the United States.

The "enemy-threat" game can . . . be played on both sides. . . .

As to Mr. Pipes's discussion of USSR civil defense, there is no space to rebut him effectively. I can only refer the interested reader to a report by the Congressional Joint Committee on Defense Production, *Civil Preparedness Review, Part II.*

Mr. Pipes is right when he says there is no clear evidence that the USSR accepts the theory of mutual deterrence. (Nor is there any longer much evidence that the U.S. Defense Department does either.) But Mr. Pipes relegates to a footnote the most important element: ". . . The Russians certainly accept the *fact* of deterrence." Even if they may find this situation "undesirable" and "transient," this is the important point. As long as this is the case, and it will be for the foreseeable future, all of the most pessimistic passages in the writings of V. D. Sokolovskii and others don't really matter.

FRED KAPLAN
Institute for Policy Studies
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Pipes's article is the most effective expression to date of the "unthinkable" nuclear holocaust which might be launched against the United States. Yet it lacks an important dimension because it postulates our collapse in exclusively military terms. We are, in my opinion, marching straight to hell; but not that way.

The Great Depression coincided with the visible rise of Stalin and his Five-Year Plans. Compared to those triumphs, our own dumping of milk and oranges into the Chicago river—while many went hungry—seemed the very nadir of capitalism. Since that time, the kowtowing of American "intellectualism" to Stalinism has, except for the decade or so following World War II, been remarkably consistent. . . .

Mr. Pipes rightly highlights the disaster of our hasty postwar demobilization, an action which made our defensive situation so unwieldy that we had to take recourse in various Maginot-line type strategies, such as the Truman Doctrine, . . . containment, NATO, etc., in the hope that if we ran hard enough, we might be able to stay in the same place. Mr. Pipes also hits the bull's-eye in stressing the American tendency to think always in terms of saving lives, in contrast to Russia, which through centuries of invasion has grown accustomed to the need for trading millions of bodies for millions of square miles.

My major objection to Mr. Pipes's article is that he fails entirely to point out that the Clausewitz-Lenin-Soviet military doctrine has a much used rear exit. After all, if war is an extension of politics by other means, then so is politics an extension of war, also by other means. Mr. Pipes assumes that the admittedly secretive military minds of the Soviet Union . . . still think in terms of conventional defeat vs. victory. There has to be some truth in such an assumption, if only because the USSR has never ceased to deprive its citizenry of badly needed consumer goods but seldom stints on military hardware. . . . On the other hand, there is no question but that Americans bitterly resent giving up one iota of their comforts to the requirements of military preparation. Jimmy Carter probably upped his popularity by ditching the B-1 bomber; in any event, few Americans will lose sleep over that or any other crucial military decision. The Soviet people are, of course, never given a choice. . . .

The sad truth, as I see it, is that we are most likely to be defeated from within. Lenin, Stalin, and their successors have always preferred the no-risk or "violence-when-necessary" option. . . .

The assumption of a holocaust foreshadowed by Mr. Pipes may help defeat his purpose by driving our "intellectual leadership" further into its historic ostrich-like position. Mr. Pipes is obviously aware of our emotional vulnerability, and his intention, I believe, in his article is to scare hell out of us by envisioning our total destruction. But this overlooks the malaise of a country so saddled with a death wish that Mr. Pipes's prophecy of doom comes almost as a happy confirmation of the biblical judgment. . . .

STANLEY W. PAGE
City College-CUNY
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It would be well-nigh impossible to exaggerate the importance of Richard Pipes's article. While the ideas developed in the article are, no doubt, his personal views, it is reasonable to assume that these views are not far removed from those set forth in the suppressed "Team B" report which opposed the conventional wisdom of the civilian-dominated defense establishment—supposedly concurred in by the Russians—that nuclear war is "unthinkable" and "unwinnable."

For years those who held opinions close to those of Mr. Pipes

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were constantly frustrated by their inability to receive a public hearing. By publishing this authoritative article, COMMENTARY has performed an invaluable public service. It has insured that there will now be an open debate within the country—and beyond—on these fateful issues. . . .

Regretfully, however, I have one point of disagreement with Mr. Pipes's brilliant presentation. . . . In his concluding paragraph, he states: "Above all, however, looms *the question of intent: as long as the Soviets persist in adhering to the Clausewitzian maxim on the function of war,* mutual deterrence does not really exist" (emphasis added).

The question of intent does present itself insofar as the doctrine of the strategic offensive is an extension of the Russian state policy of expansionism, whose dynamics must ultimately lead to war. But Mr. Pipes's formulation would seem to undercut the very premises which give ultimate validity to his thesis.

The basic problem is that, *as long as nations are free to make war,* Clausewitz's maxims cannot be either "adhered to" or set aside at will. The laws of war are ineluctable . . .: they cannot be repealed by technology, intent, or wishful thinking. The object of war (grand strategy) will always be victory, defined as the destruction of the enemy's capacity and will to resist and, for this, military superiority, material and strategic, is quintessential. In the nuclear age, nuclear war and conventional war are complements, not alternatives. Consequently, for victory (or to avoid defeat) it is necessary to have a first- and second- and third-strike nuclear capacity as well as the capability of conducting (or repelling) a super-blitzkrieg. As Mr. Pipes has made clear, the Soviet leaders have long understood this, have armed for superiority, and are on the verge of achieving it, if they have not already done so.

This places us at the crossroads. We cannot continue along the present path, deluding ourselves that Sisyphean solutions like SALT II, III, etc., etc., can prevent or alter the laws of war. As a nation, we must summon the courage to look into the abyss, from which we have averted our gaze, and say: the only escape for nations from the scourge of war is for the great powers to transcend both SALT II and MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions) and to move together to *destroy the very capacity to make war*—through rapid, mutual, progressive disarmament, both nuclear and conventional, with on-site inspection and verification at each stage, with open borders and free movements of peoples. *There is no other way.* There is no mutual deterrence other than mutual disarmament. But if this fails, America has no choice but to proceed full speed ahead with unilateral deterrence.

The hawk-dove dichotomy has always been vulgarly oversimplified. As a nation, if we are to be faithful to our ideals, our proposals and goals must always be under the sign of the dove. But as we would not be masters, so we would not be slaves, and, for this, the eagle is rightfully our national symbol.

If America shows a steadfast will . . . . sooner or later, the Russians will be persuaded, or compelled, by internal and external factors to abandon their expansionist aims and choose peace through general disarmament. Should that day arrive, the world would enter a new era and Clausewitz's maxim would be transformed into "Peace is the continuation of politics by other means." But, until that day comes, we would be well-advised to heed Mr. Pipes's warning and keep our powder dry.

ELIAS M. SCHWARZBART
New York City

RICHARD PIPES writes:

There is a Russian anecdote from the 1930's which tells of a sudden rush into Poland of thousands of Soviet rabbits. A puzzled Polish hare stops one and asks for the reason of this mass migration. "Stalin has ordered all camels to be shot," a Russian rabbit replies. "But you are no camel." "Sure, but just try to prove it!"

Like these unfortunate rabbits, I would have a very difficult time proving that I am none of the things of which some of the above letters accuse me: a man indifferent to the moral dimensions of nuclear war; an alarmist or else a warmonger; an ill-informed or even deliberately deceptive analyst of Soviet, American, and Clausewitzian doctrines. Nuclear energy in all its forms, but especially in its awesome destructive capacities, is perhaps the single most emotional issue of our time. Many people, as soon as they hear the word "nuclear" pronounced, freeze their mental faculties and begin to thrash in all directions, especially that from which the sound had emanated. As long as they remain in this condition, they are quite incapable of hearing what is being said to them.

How else account for such fantastic assertions as Fred Kaplan's who interprets my article to mean that the Russians are "about to declare a nuclear war [on us]"; or Irwin Stark's who has me "clearly" implying that the United States "cannot escape the necessity of launching a preemptive strike against the Soviet Union"; or Congressman Downey's who takes it to be my opinion that the Russians see nuclear war as a "mere logical extension of the diplomatic note"? What else but some temporary suspension of his critical faculties would cause B. Bruce-Briggs to attribute to me "the much quoted fact" that the Soviet Union had suffered 30 million dead in World War II, although I speak of 20 million? Or to reject my statement that the United States has "no general staff" with the flat assertion, unsupported by evidence, that "we *do* have general staffs" (who is "we"?, what "general staffs"?)? Or why else would Melvin A. Goodman, who places my scholarship in doubt, compromise his own by "correcting" my figure of nine Soviet multi-million cities, which I had clearly stated as drawn from the 1970 Soviet census (for purposes of comparison with the 1970 U.S. census), with a higher figure, but for 1975?

Be that as it may, there seems no point in taking up space to prove that I am not a camel, or a "sophisticated version" of a "red-neck colonel" (how that image evokes its counterpart, the "long-haired hippie," conjured by the radical Right whenever it cannot think of a better argument). Experience with Soviet media has long taught me to ignore such personal attacks and misconstructions as one ignores all the other minor irritants of life. Paul Craig Roberts's interesting letter throws light on the psychology of a certain type of American intellectual who, for good historical reasons, cannot extricate himself from his adversary role vis-à-vis his own government.

There are, nevertheless, several legitimate questions raised by these letters which call for a response.

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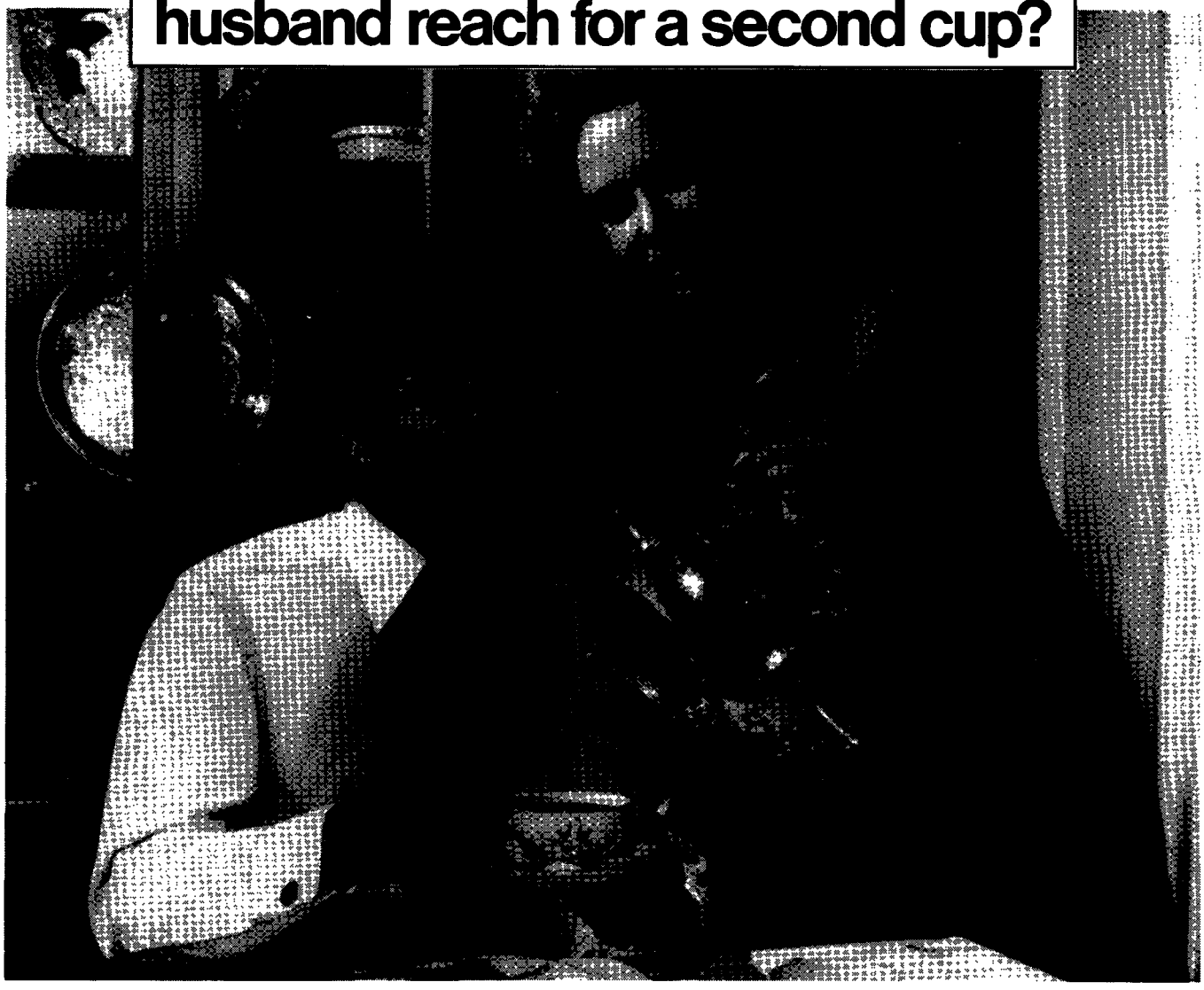

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These seem to me to group themselves under two principal headings:

1. What, in fact, is Soviet nuclear doctrine, and how, if at all, does it differ from its U.S. counterpart? And the corollary question, what is the relationship between Soviet military doctrine and Soviet political-military practice?

2. Does the Soviet war-fighting and war-winning doctrine, which I postulate, make any operational sense in the light of what is known about the destructive effects of thermonuclear warfare?

For clarity of exposition, I shall take up these questions in reverse order.

NEARLY all laymen as well as many political scientists and journalists who write on strategic subjects tend to assume that given the number of warheads presently available in the arsenals of the two superpowers as well as their accuracy and immense explosive power, any all-out nuclear war would inevitably cause the destruction on both sides of hundreds of millions of people, as well as of all the large and medium-sized cities and industries. When Mr. Goodman cites the figure of 41 million Soviet citizens presently living in what he defines as major cities, he does so as a means of conveying the immense human losses that the USSR would suffer in an all-out war. Mr. Kaplan does the same when he asserts that under conditions implicit in my postulated scenario, namely a retaliatory U.S. second strike, " far more than 30 million" Soviet citizens would perish. These figures, however, for all their scientific pretense, are no more than articles of faith: they rest on nothing remotely resembling verifiable data. No intelligent consumer would buy a washing machine without doing more investigation of the facts than some of our outspoken strategic writers undertake when addressing themselves to questions crucial to national security.

What are the facts, as best as they can be ascertained? In 1976, scientists working at the Boeing Aerospace Company under the direction of Thomas K. Jones conducted analyses and tests to determine the likely effect of Soviet civil-defense measures on both the survivability of the Soviet population and industry, and on the ability of Soviet society to recover from a nuclear war. The Boeing Report's extremely careful conclusions are as follows:* An "out of the blue," total surprise U.S. attack against population centers would cause between 70 and 105 million Soviet casualties. This figure, however, is for all practical purposes meaningless since the U.S. has no preemptive (surprise) doctrine or plans—although clearly the Soviet General Staff must take such a contingency into account.

More meaningful by far are the probable Soviet casualties that would ensue as a result of a United States second strike, i.e., a retaliation against the USSR in response to its preemptive strike. These estimates vary, being dependent on two principal factors: the way U.S. missiles are targeted (against industries or against people), and the amount of time the Soviet Union would have at its disposal to put into effect its civil-defense measures (that it would have some time to do so is certain since the scenario posits a Soviet first strike). The Boeing Report concludes:

> Given a first strike by the USSR, the U.S. would have on the order of half of its nuclear arsenal (ICBM's, SLBM's, and bombers) surviving. If these weapons were programmed to achieve maximum destruction of industrial targets, the entire U.S. surviving inventory could destroy unprotected people in, at most, 3 per cent of Soviet territory. If the people were protected by simple, foxhole-type shelters, the lethal area that could be imposed by the U.S. surviving arsenal would be reduced to one-third of 1 per cent of the Soviet land mass. People in the remaining 99 2/3 of the Soviet Union would survive. There would be no lingering lethal fallout.
>
> If the U.S. were to program all its weapons to detonate at ground level, a lethal level of fallout might be spread over a wider area, but such an action would cut in half the lethality of the weapon against industrial targets. With favorable weather conditions, a lethal level of fallout could be spread over up to 15 per cent of Soviet territory. However, simple shelters can be constructed in a few hours to protect people against fallout until the radiation intensity decays to a non-lethal level . . . . Within a week after a worst-case U.S. retaliatory attack, the Russians could be out of their shelters for at least an 8-hour work day in 97 per cent of Soviet territory (p. 7).

As concerns human fatalities resulting from a U.S. retaliatory attack, Mr. Jones estimates that were the Russians to have three days during which to implement their civil-defense program, in an all-out U.S. retaliatory second strike their total casualties would be 10-11 million people. A frightful figure, without doubt: but only half the casualties the Soviet Union had suffered in World War II. Incidentally, this is approximately the number of "kulaks" that, as Stalin confided to Churchill, had been "liquidated" during the post-1928 collectivization drive. By comparison, an all-out Soviet countervalue attack on the U.S. would cause—because of the greater population density and virtual absence of civil-defense measures—between 107 and 130 million fatalities, as well as the destruction of 50-80 per cent of U.S. industrial capacity.

The Boeing team also carried out tests to determine the effects of nuclear blasts on machinery protected by the simple devices recommended in Soviet civil-defense manuals and at least partly implemented in recent years. It found that "even large machines, if properly protected, could survive if they were a few hundred feet from a 40-kiloton nuclear blast and 2,000 feet from a 1-megaton blast" (p. 73). The Report concludes that "if the observed examples of industrial facility dispersal and separation become the pattern for a significant portion of the Soviet Union's future capital expansion, their industry would require little or no preattack hardening to survive and recover rapidly from a nuclear war" (p. 73).

These facts show how irresponsible it is for uninformed or emotionally-driven persons to ridicule the claims of the Soviet military that a country properly prepared for nuclear war and in possession of a sound strategy could survive a nuclear war and emerge from it both victorious and viable. The notion underpinning our mutual-assured-destruction doctrine since the days of McNamara, namely, that our second-strike deterrent would destroy one-quarter of the Soviet population and two-thirds of Soviet industry, seems to be quite irrelevant in the light of the facts as known today.

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* *Industrial Survival and Recovery after Nuclear Attack: A Report to the Joint Committee on Defense Production, U.S. Congress* (D180-20236-1), 1976.

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Once these calculations are kept in mind—and there is no reason to suppose that Soviet strategists have arrived at significantly different estimates of their potential losses—then we are in a better position to discuss Soviet nuclear doctrine and its relationship to political practice. Several correspondents charge me with ignoring the consequences of the fact which I myself had pointed out, namely, that in the Soviet Union military policies are decided upon by the Politburo and are always subject to overriding political considerations. Clearly, however, in emphasizing the importance of Soviet military doctrine and the preponderant role of generals in its formulation, I was not saying that Soviet generals and their theories would determine when and where their country would wage war, least of all a nuclear war. The point of my thesis was that in view of the fact that in the USSR military affairs are considered the province of the militarily experienced and educated professional, Soviet leadership is guided in its view of the utility of nuclear weapons by its military community. Hence the importance of military doctrine in the Soviet Union as an indication of both what the military think and what the politicians are likely to do should they ever decide on resorting to war. It seems to be inescapable, given the thrust of Soviet military doctrine and the country's immense diversion of its resources to military purposes (according to some Soviet dissidents, 60 per cent of their country's industrial plant works for the military sector), that the Soviet leadership has long since bought the military doctrine proffered by its generals. In other words: we do not know and cannot know what the Politburo thinks; no one, the Politburo itself included, knows how it will act in a crisis situation; but we can say with a high degree of confidence that it believes that should nuclear war break out, for whatever reasons, the Soviet Union would be able to fight, survive, and emerge meaningfully victorious from it. In this sense, the Soviet military's "war-fighting," "war-winning" doctrine is not an alternative to Soviet political doctrine and the decision-making process, but its accessory.

ARE American and Soviet doctrines really as different as I depict them? Mr. Bruce-Briggs calls attention to the fact that in the United States there are many prominent strategists who do not accept the mutual-assured-destruction doctrine, and names, among others, Paul Nitze, Herman Kahn, and Albert Wohlstetter. Bernard Brodie urges me to read "the publicly expressed views of the American military as assiduously as [I read] those of the Soviet military," and promises me that should I do so, I would find "really nothing . . . novel or distinctive about the latter."

In the United States, with its free press, anyone can speak up on all matters, strategic ones included. So, in this issue of COMMENTARY, Mr. Stark urges unilateral disarmament, Mr. Kaplan implies that any future war will be started not by the Soviet Union but American "imperialism," while Mr. Roberts believes that the "Soviet military forces comprise the most powerful offensive capability the world has ever seen" and accepts my conclusions. True, also, Messrs. Nitze, Kahn, and Wohlstetter have often criticized U.S. doctrine. But these writers do not determine U.S. strategic policy, and it is quite misleading to pick out individual voices of dissent (as the Soviet press habitually does) and depict them as authoritative. Our strategic doctrine may have many sources, but it is ultimately formulated by the civilian leadership which constitutionally directs our military policy, i.e., the President and his executive officers charged with management of the defense establishment. Their opinions and theirs alone represent U.S. doctrine. And as one listens to them, there can be no doubt as to what that doctrine is and has been since the early 1960's. Let me cite, as an illustration, two statements of recent date. The 1977 U.S. Defense Department Report has the following phrase by the then Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld: our policy is to have "some minimum force which can survive even a well-executed surprise attack in adequate numbers to strike back with devastating force at the enemy's economic and political assets" (p. 46). And here is Paul Warnke, the current head of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency:

> At the present time there is only one threat to our physical security and that is the Soviet Union. The only way we can deal with the USSR is by nuclear arms with the concept of assured destruction (*Strategic Sufficiency, Fact or Fiction*, p. 74).

These and many similar authoritative statements define our strategic posture. They are implemented by our defense-procurements policy which decides on weapons systems on the grounds of their contribution (or lack of contribution) to our deterrent capability. Undeniably, there are highly-placed individuals in our government who think differently and would like our doctrine revised. But conventional wisdom, which dominates public opinion and much of congressional opinion, makes it extremely difficult to deviate from the dogma of mutual assured destruction.

It does little good to quote in this context the public pronouncements of a Brezhnev, Arbatov, or some retired general working for Arbatov's Institute. For one, these are addressed to the Western public as a means of exerting pressure on the U.S. SALT delegation. Secondly, dictatorships with expansionist ambitions like to emphasize what will happen if they are forced to resort to war as a means of ensuring compliance with their demands. They always couple such admonitions with dire warnings to the fictitious "enemy" about what his fate will be if he persists in his obstinacy, the "enemy" being "U.S. imperialism" in the Soviet Union's view, and "international Jewish finance" in the Nazi. I recall passing through Germany as a refugee in the early months of World War II and being surprised by Nazi postcards depicting the horrors of the very war which the Germans were perpetrating at the time.

My article conceded that the actual differences dividing the strategic doctrines of the two countries may not be quite as sharp as I have drawn them for the sake of exposition. "Our deterrence doctrine leaves room for some limited offensive action," I wrote, "just as the Russians include elements of deterrence in their 'war-fighting' and 'war-winning' doctrine." This said, one assumes that a serious student of political and military affairs has the necessary discrimination to distingush the incidental from the essential, and the exception from the norm. With its help he should not allow himself to be distracted either by scattered Soviet denials of the "war-winning"

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doctrine or by pronouncements of individual Americans opposing the official U.S. doctrine of mutual assured destruction.

I HAVE left Mr. Brodie's letter to the end, for it deserves separate treatment. Mr. Brodie was a leading participant in the developments I have sketched and feels personally injured by some of my remarks. Let me state at the outset that I had no intention of singling out his "malign" influence: I happened to cite him because he had had a powerful influence on the evolution of our strategic doctrine and has written on the subject continuously for over thirty years, which gives him unique status as spokesman for our dominant school of strategic thought.

First, let me clear up my alleged misquotation. There is none. In the passage to which I alluded, Mr. Brodie dismisses as a "ridicuous and reckless fantasy" the notion that under conditions of "total war" there is room for "wartime production." Since this notion happens to be Soviet strategic doctrine and it is hardly taken seriously by anyone in the United States, it seems reasonable to conclude that Mr. Brodie regards both this doctrine and those who hold it, namely, the Soviet military (to whom he alludes in his footnote), as in the grip of a "ridiculous and reckless fantasy."

Mr. Brodie is upset that I should blame him and his fellow contributors to *The Absolute Weapon* for having reached their fundamental conclusions on the strategic implications of nuclear weapons "without much reference to the analysis of the effects of atomic weapons carried out by the military." He retorts that "to the slight extent that such analysis existed at the time, it was simply ludicrous." That is not exactly correct since the U.S. Strategic Bombing Surveys of the effects of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were available at the time. But even if he were correct: since when does a scientist draw positive, non-hypothetical conclusions on the basis of "ludicrous" evidence and, when challenged, justify himself that he could not have done better because he only had "ludicrous" evidence at his disposal? Insufficient evidence should yield either no conclusions or highly tentative ones: *The Absolute Weapon* brims with extremely far-reaching and emphatic conclusions that challenge head-on traditional strategic thinking as it had evolved from Sun Tzu to Clausewitz, Jomini, and Delbrück. And why adhere to conclusions reached on the basis of "ludicrous" evidence today, thirty years later (as Mr. Brodie says he still does), after so much excellent evidence has become available?

The distinction between "republishing" and "reissuing" is too fine for my ear: to me the two words mean the same. I realize that Mr. Brodie brought out the original edition of *Strategy in the Missile Age* in 1959, before Sokolovskii's manual appeared. But I also know that once this manual had come out and been translated (1962-63), Mr. Brodie had the opportunity of revising his book, or, at the very least, writing a preface to the 1965 "reissue" informing

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the reader what changes the first Soviet strategic manual to appear in thirty-five years had injected into the picture. In fact his 1965 "reissue" does include a new preface, but one which makes no mention whatsoever of changes in Soviet strategic thinking. He may seek to use all this as justification, but it is really part of the problem: it strongly suggests that he thought Sokolovskii's book to be of no consequence.

Why this should have been the case Mr. Brodie spells out in his letter. He expresses annoyance with what he perceives to be my nagging insistence that "one cannot say anything about what an American strategy ought to be without referring everlastingly to what the Russians think." Why not "follow [one's] own track," he asks, alluding to my seeming praise of Soviet strategic doctrine. First, let me say that I nowhere suggest one must "everlastingly" refer to the Russians: regularly will do. Second, when I spoke of the Russians "*following their own track*" I *obviously* did not mean that they ignored our doctrine, but rather that, having looked at ours and found it wanting, they developed their own counter-strategy, intended to neutralize ours. I can assure Mr. Brodie that they are thoroughly familiar with his strategic writings. He, for his part, is so scornful of theirs that apparently he is not even aware that Marshal Sokolovskii has been dead since 1968, since he admonishes him in the present tense.

I simply do not understand the meaning, or at any rate, utility of a strategic doctrine formulated and implemented without constant reference to the strategic thinking of one's potential enemies. The very notion of such a narcissistic strategy boggles the mind.

Mr. Brodie cites from my article a passage from Marshal Sokolovskii that "the essential nature of war as a continuation of politics does not change with changing technology and armaments," and asks: "Who thinks otherwise?" Well, Mr. Brodie himself, for one: for to say, as he does, that under nuclear conditions the function of the military is not to win wars but to avert wars means no more and no less than that technology and armaments have removed from the politician's arsenal the option of going to war. Mr. Kissinger thinks so too, when he asserts that "the traditional mode of military analysis which saw in war a continuation of politics but with its own appropriate means is no longer applicable."

I concur that anyone who believes in the utility of war *ipso facto* assumes that it serves political objectives, as Mr. Schwarzbart reminds us. But the whole point is that the dominant school of U.S. strategists has decided that all-out nuclear war has no conceivable utility. "The object of war will always be victory," Mr. Schwarzbart rightly says. But if in nuclear war there is said to be no possibility of victory, it follows that nuclear war can have no object. In this sense, it seems to me, Clausewitz's dictum is indeed at the center of the strategic debate. And whether one believes in its continued validity (as the Russians do) or not (as most of our strategists do not) is a matter of no mean consequence for national security.

Simone Weil

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

An essayist addressing himself to the life, opinions, and character of Simone Weil is obliged to confront her anti-Semitism full tilt, as Edward Grossman has done in his review of Simone Pétrement's biography [Books in Review, June]. But his judgment is touched by spots of the same disease; perhaps it is impossible to handle such virulence at close range without coming away vaguely infected, if only by the struggle to find just outlets for one's justified repugnance.

An unjust outlet, it seems to me, is to speak of Simone Weil as a stale Jewish female "type." If she is such a type, who are her predecessors, where are her successors? One cannot speak fairly of types without the illuminations of a larger context. Mr. Grossman writes, "The type that Simone Weil appears to have embodied . . . is the intellectual-middle-class-virgin of Jewish extraction." He elaborates slightly: "Some of the souls who resemble her" keep diaries of a certain kind. They also have a certain kind of nose, flat shoes, migraines, and they hate being made of flesh. But where does this epithet—"intellectual-middle-class-virgin-of-Jewish-extraction"—lead, how does it enlighten, to what other Jewish virgins, celebrated or private, might it allude? Simone Weil is a political and, some think, a religious figure. What other middle-class virgin women of Jewish origins have been of her political or religious or philosophical stripe? And in what way is virginity relevant to any thinker's political expression? Mr. Grossman lays no ground for his coarse-grained epithet. As an epithet, without the support of life, literature, or history, it emerges only as a gratuitous slur. Anti-Semites too deal in unsupported Jewish "types." . . . There are more sophisticated, sharper, and tougher ways to strike at Simone Weil's intellectual and moral irresponsibilities than to upbraid her for spinsterism. In doing that, Mr. Grossman means to trivialize Weil, but surely her already sturdy reputation as a "saint" is too threatening to the Jewish people, whom she hated, to be trivialized. Trivialization does not meet the strength of the threat. The assault on "the nose," shoes, "hairdo out of the cartoons," Jewishness, and sexual status common to "her type" leaves the saint intact and diminishes only her critic. Sneering will never substitute for argument.

A second and much more deeply unjust outlet for Mr. Grossman's justified repugnance for Simone Weil is to wish that Hitler had caught her. What a lesson (Mr. Grossman would have us understand) for an anti-Semitic apostate! "Simone Weil," he writes, "was denied the logical, just climax to her life and work—to be dropped into France in 1943, there to be arrested, tagged with the yellow star, interned with other Jews, shipped East." *That* would teach the self-denier who is a Jew! But the use of Hitler as an instrument to punish bad Jews, even a Jew like Simone Weil who was as clear an enemy of the Jewish people as Hitler himself, ought to be contrary both to logic and to conscience. It is true that her views abetted Hitler. And it is true that had she perished in the death camps it would have made a nice intellectual irony. But it is an irony that no Jew, not even an intellectual (non-virgin?) essayist, ought to perceive as the "just climax" to the life of another Jew. No Jew, not even a bad Jew, not even an execrable Jew, not even an anti-Semitic intellectual-middle-class-virgin Jew, deserved Hitler. I am not sure whether, had Simone Weil died in Auschwitz, we would have counted her death as *kiddush ha-shem*; I suspect we would have wanted to, for the sake of a more spiritual

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kind of irony; but one thing has got to be certain: there can be no Jewish use for Hitler. Hitler's work must not be made into a Jewish opportunity to deal posthumously with Jewish miscreants. In his desire to punish Simone Weil for, as he puts it, "the outrage she committed, not on her kin, but on herself," Mr. Grossman should find a different kind of "logical, just climax." She was a defamer; her falsehoods are owed repeated public contempt, and the stench of her so-called sainthood should be exposed. But to posit the murder of still another Jew by Hitler as "logical" and "just" is to abet Hitler, and in that abetment to imitate Simone Weil at her most offensive.

CYNTHIA OZICK
New Rochelle, New York

EDWARD GROSSMAN writes:

Cynthia Ozick harps on two lonely phrases, giving the impression that I passed judgment. Not so. I don't wish that Simone Weil had suffered the same fate as those whom she locked out of her heart, and I don't think that she deserved it any more than they did—how could I possibly? Pity, not vengeance, was the burden of my review.

I did wish to suggest that such a fate might have come as the tremendous martyrdom that Simone Weil looked for. While we must consider it intolerable and ironic and poetically just, she might have accepted it as just indeed, something she deserved. The spirit of justice and the sense of irony are both worth exercising here. However, I am sorry that in that phrase "a just climax" I didn't draw the distinction between them. I should have written, "poetically just."

As for types, do they have to be "stale"? It is enough to look around to see how vivid many of them can be.

Quotas & College Admissions

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In reference to John H. Bunzel's "Bakke vs. University of California" [March] and the subsequent discussion in your letters columns [July], I have yet to hear advocated the open admission of Jews to universities as a compensation for the injustices of the past—the *numerus clausus,* the quota, the gentlemen's agreement, "the ark of the restrictive covenant."

The advocate of affirmative action will immediately reply that Jews have already—or have always—achieved in higher education all that their proportion of the population entitles them to.

Yet from my years as college adviser and later as principal of a highly academic high school with a 90 per cent Jewish student body, I have some ironic memories. Nobody not a Jew—or somebody in my anomalous position—has any notion of the solidity and effectiveness of the discrimination against Jewish applicants to competitive colleges during the 40's and 50's—and of course before, though of that I have no personal knowledge. In those days a Jew from New York could hope for admission to Dartmouth or Smith or Harvard or Vassar or Yale only if he were extremely able and outstandingly vespiform. One virtue without the other was worthless,

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and he went to one of the city colleges or NYU. If he was not from New York, or perhaps Chicago, the Jew could not be rejected under the fiction of "geographical distribution," and he had a better chance—but not a fair shake. Even if he had already broken one barrier and had achieved the status of applying from a posh boarding school, he had difficulties.

The climate slowly improved during the 50's. But in the 60's, when colleges became publicly conscious of their racial shortcomings and began courting black applicants, the places that had been opening up for Jews were awarded to blacks. College admission for a capable Jew became reasonable only after the colleges had been dismantled by political upheaval, depopulated by transfers and dropouts, or beggared by the Nixon-Arab depression.

For medical and law schools these observations obtain *a fortiori*.

By the 50's, furthermore, most competitive colleges (except those like Princeton rejoicing in Old Southern ambience) were eager to get black applicants. My school never, to my recollection, had a black student rejected; some were accepted by colleges so competitive that they had serious trouble in keeping up after admission.

The percentage of Jews in American colleges may have been at least as high as the percentage in the total population. Covert quotas may thus have caused their administrators few qualms of democratic conscience. But the number of financially and intellectually qualified Jews rejected by prestigious colleges was a notorious scandal against which it was hazardous to protest, since a school that protested—and no outsider could readily get the facts to support a protest—would almost guarantee retaliation against its students. My one carefully researched and mildly phrased remonstrance to one proudly libertarian university hurt our applicants for years afterward.

Thus I cannot be persuaded to "open admission" or "affirmative action" by any rubbish of general social and historical guilt. In college admission, at least, Jews have suffered perhaps more than blacks; and quotas and other numbers games now would benefit blacks by excluding Jews.

What is chiefly involved is an *economic* and *cultural* question. It is not important, it is not desirable, to make college *easy* for large numbers. It never was easy for large numbers of poor Jews, who were driven by *cultural* tradition to work and sacrifice for education. It is demoralizing and disastrous to let colleges lure those who do not want it—whether they are rich Wasps or poor blacks. But it is socially desirable to make higher education *possible* for those who want it and need money to get it, whether they are poor Wasps or poor blacks or poor Jews.

SPENCER BROWN

Pleasantville, New York

Churchill and Us

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Edward N. Luttwak, "Churchill and Us" [June], is admirable, and its content is strikingly true and therefore scary.

England was rescued ultimately by the U.S. But who will rescue us from our suicidal follies?

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Perspective being the most elusive quality in political debate, COMMENTARY readers should be especially indebted to Edward N. Luttwak. . . . The sixteen pages of his two articles—"Defense Reconsidered" [March] and "Churchill and Us"—are the most exceptional writings I have seen in any magazine in years. Mr. Luttwak is a master of both argument and the use of language. . . .

For any who may have yet missed Mr. Luttwak's point, in 1939 an unnamed writer in the London *Times* wrote: "The warnings are not heard. If heard, they are not believed. If believed, they are not thought to apply to the believer."

ROBERT M. JONES

Dallas, Texas

Gore Vidal

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Because Joseph Epstein's analysis of Gore Vidal's writings ["What Makes Vidal Run," June] starts with some acute literary observations, it is somewhat surprising to find Vidal's leftist political views simplistically accounted for by his "contentious homosexuality." . . . Although Vidal has obviously not resolved his own ambivalent sexual feelings, nor is willing to be boxed totally into one inflexible category (thus his public advocacy not of homosexuality, as Mr. Epstein states, but of bisexuality), it is quite beside the point of his politics whether or not Vidal considers himself homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. Nor does Mr. Epstein make a convincing case that Vidal's politics are all wrong simply by quoting fragments of his critical comments about the U.S. as corrupt, a garrison state, etc. (ignoring here that Vidal exaggerates not only for laughs but to make a serious point—the difference between a caricaturist and a comic).

That the source of Vidal's wit and politics may be anger is a plausible, if not original, deduction. But to trace such anger to a homosexual jealousy and "hatred" of "Jews, academics, the middle class, and heterosexuals" ignores every other objective social and political condition of our lives. Criticizing or caricaturing some of the attitudes or actions of those who speak for these groups does not constitute the pogromatic "hatred" Mr. Epstein suggests. Do Mr. Epstein's caustic criticisms of Vidal make Mr. Epstein a hater of Wasps and homosexuals? And does Mr. Epstein consider himself a conservative (or whatever he regards himself) because hs is (presumably) Jewish, academic, middle class, and heterosexual? Such elements no doubt enter into one's political position, but are hardly the crucial factors.

And who were those "many" homosexuals who were the "Pied Pipers of the youth rebellion of the late 60's"? . . . The anti-war leaders of the late 60's—those who organized draft resistance and rallies and marches—happen to have been overwhelmingly heterosexual. But hetero- or homo- or bi-, their anger—and mine—originated not in our sexual identifications but in the nature of the Vietnam war. The systems and psychologies which created and pursued that war and persist today do not have exclusive claim on heterosexuality. To imply that leftist politics somehow derive from homosexual anger (and that both are equally invalid products of "sexual and political adventurism"—and anti-Semitic too) is absurdly irresponsible.

ANN DAVIDON

Haverford, Pennsylvania

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

I wonder if Ann Davidon has read Gore Vidal's book, *Matters of*

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Fact and Fiction. She does not say that she has, and I am going to assume here that she hasn't. If she had, I do not think she would write so confidently. Because Vidal's book is so contentious on the subject of homosexuality, it is he who forces the issue. Far from being quite beside the point, Vidal makes homosexuality precisely the point over and over again in his essays. In my essay I documented this with quotation, and I do not think there is any need to do so further here.

I grant Mrs. Davidon that, as you do not have to be Jewish to love Levy's rye bread, neither do you have to be homosexual to hold left-wing opinions. I agree with her, too, that Gore Vidal is serious about his opinions. What I claimed in my essay is that, in his seriousness, he is not at all persuasive.

I do not agree with Mrs. Davidon when she writes: "Does Mr. Epstein consider himself a conservative . . . because he is (presumably) Jewish, academic, middle class, and heterosexual? Such elements no doubt enter into one's political position, but are hardly crucial factors." Sometimes such elements are crucial factors, I believe, and sometimes not. It would be foolish to praise Tolstoy for being a heterosexual—as Gore Vital praises Christopher Isherwood largely for being a homosexual—but equally foolish not to take into consideration that he was an aristocrat. Much depends upon the extent to which one's point of view, whether consciously or not, is influenced by one's class, professional, or (something new) sexual affiliation. To ignore such matters may have the sanction of conscience, but it outrages reason.

I hope that Mrs. Davidon will forgive me if I do not name the Pied Pipers of the youth rebellion of the late 60's. (If I were to name them, I suspect she would accuse me of McCarthyism.) But in referring to them I was not thinking of opposition to the Vietnam war alone. I know that people who consider themselves of the Left like to take credit for their opposition to the Vietnam war—opposed as they were, as Mrs. Davidon says, to "the systems and psychologies which created and pursued that war and persist today"—but if they wish to do so I think they must also take their share of credit for the assault on the universities, the urban riots, and the confrontation politics that helped to elect Richard M. Nixon to the Presidency. Credit, as they say, where credit is due.

Carter and Israel

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Carter and Israel" [July], Steven L. Spiegel points out the errors inherent in an ambiguous administration policy only peripherally concerned with the issues in the Arab-Israel conflict. As Mr. Spiegel notes in his perceptive analysis, political leaders who find themselves in these situations rely on institutionalized bureaucracies whose allegiance (I would add) is not to the voters but to others (e. g., business interests). Nevertheless, the article fails to address other important trends. In reality, the situation is

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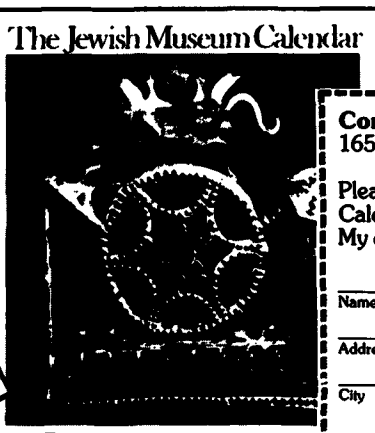

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much more serious than even Mr. Spiegel suggests. The administration's and in particular the State Department's recent pronouncements (e.g., by Hodding Carter III) represent nothing less than the attempt by the U. S. itself to return to the Arabs all the territories lost during the 1967 war, without concomitant peace treaties, as well as the acceptance of the PLO's goal of a radical Palestinian mini-state (euphemism, Palestinian homeland).

These goals of the Arab extremists are merely the modernized version of the Nazi tactics in Europe prior to World War II, namely, the step-by-step diplomatic erosion of the territorial defenses of the victims until their destruction by military means is assured. In the present case, the scenario is similar (surrender of territory) but the political style is more subtle, since the victim is tougher, more wary, and has enormous popular support among the American public. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal is the same, namely so gravely to weaken the victim and isolate it from external assistance that its destruction becomes automatic.

The history of the Arab-Israel conflict is a history of promise and abandonment. Three acts by the nations of the world, the Balfour Declaration, the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine, and the United Nations partition decision, were acts of affirmation, legitimizing the historic identification of the Jewish people with the land of Israel. Each act in turn was followed by cynical, politically motivated abandonment of the very purposes for which it had been proposed.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 and the League of Nations Mandate of 1920 clearly obligated Great Britain to facilitate the establishment of a Jewish national homeland. Nevertheless, the British, bowing to Arab violence and to the narrow perceptions of imperialism, limited and eventually forbade immigration and purchases of Arab-owned land by Jews. Thus, the purposes of the Mandate were subverted and the territory became a British province with a permanent Jewish minority; hardly a national home. . . .

The UN partition decision was the most explicit expression of the justice of the Jewish claim to its national identity in the historic land of Israel. Here again that decision was abrogated by Arab violence and the acceptance by the world community of that violence. . . .

Is the stage now being set for the next abandonment, that of the American commitment to Israel? Is the Geneva Conference merely to be a euphemism for another Munich, with President Carter playing Chamberlain and Israel's Premier Begin cast as Benes? If not, why the intense pressure on Israel to retreat to the pre-1967 armistice lines and accept a PLO state despite the continued Arab refusal to consider recognition of Israel, acceptance of its right to exist, and any of the forms of a true peace?

The people of the U. S. must send a clear, unambiguous signal to the administration that we expect the fulfillment of Jimmy Carter's campaign promises. We expect America to go to Geneva to bring real peace, not Munich!

DANIEL E. SONENSHINE
Virginia Beach, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is nothing wrong with Steven L. Spiegel's article except that it is too circumspect in assessing the intent of the present United States administration.

It has become painfully obvious . . . that Carter, Brzezinski, and Vance are busy trussing up Israel like a chicken to be plucked . . . at leisure.

By a combination of graceless pronouncement and capricious action, the U.S. administration is attempting so to demoralize and unnerve Israel that it will see itself with no choice but to accede to Geneva. There it will be obliged to ratify a preordained solution: withdrawal to the 1948 borders, a PLO state, and continuing non-recognition by the Arab states. . . .

What is more disconcerting is the disarray and passivity of what had hitherto been Israel's only effective source of external advocacy, the Jewish community of the United States. Henry Kissinger's major contribution to "resolving" the Middle East issue was perhaps his demonstration that the "American Jewish lobby" is a paper tiger. Mr. Spiegel's evidence—and other straws in the wind—lead one to believe that the present administration has moved from duplicity toward its Jewish constituency to an active attempt to bully it into silence, if not acquiescence. It is time for the American Jew to ask himself if he really has more to fear from his neighbors' reaction to empty gas tanks than he has from the obliteration of Israel.

MEYER W. BUCOVETSKY
Toronto, Ontario

STEVEN L. SPIEGEL writes:

In order to answer adequately the letters from Daniel E. Sonenshine and Meyer W. Bucovetsky, it is necessary to review the events which have occurred since my article was written. Though Mr. Bucovetsky believes that the American Jewish community has been in a state of "disarray and passivity," it seems to me that the active and concerted Jewish reaction to President Carter's Middle East policy has been unprecedented.

By early June the White House was being bombarded with criticism from Jewish supporters of Israel—from the grass-roots to the leadership level—all arguing that Mr. Begin deserved a chance to demonstrate in Washington what his policies actually were and that Israel deserved the opportunity to deal directly with the Arabs without the Carter administration "settling" the conflict through negotiations between the White House and the State Department. In response, the administration sent Vice President Mondale to San Francisco in mid-June to deliver a speech which was designed to quell this criticism; it had the reverse effect. Though Mondale reiterated the administration's commitment to genuine peace in clearer terms than had become customary, he seemed to emphasize the differences between the Carter approach and that of Israel's supporters by stressing the need for a Palestinian homeland and Israeli territorial withdrawals and by expressing the administration's confidence in the Arab leaders' desire for peace with Israel.

When criticism intensified at home—highlighted by a Senate speech by New York's Senator Jacob Javits—and when some officials in Washington thought they detected a hardening in the position of the new Israeli government, the administration unwisely issued a statement read by State Department spokesman Hodding Carter III which may have been moderate on the issue of the Palestinians but which played down the normalization of relations and was embarrassingly explicit in discussing the territories from which Israel would have to withdraw.

In response to the political storm

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which promptly engulfed him, President Carter rapidly called for a moratorium on public statements regarding the Arab-Israeli dispute until after Prime Minister Begin's visit—a moratorium which would have been more wisely declared when Carter took office. Cooler heads now prevailed, and a meeting of Jewish leaders was called at the White House, giving the President an opportunity to break his own moratorium. By all accounts he spoke eloquently of his commitment to Israel, stressed his basic requirement for Arab acceptance of normalization—including diplomatic and commercial relations—as a necessary element in any Arab-Israeli settlement, and claimed for the first time as President that a Palestinian homeland would have to be linked to Jordan—a statement he repeated publicly a few days later in weaker form. The Begin-Carter meetings followed and were on the whole a success due to the excellent rapport between the President and the Prime Minister and to an unexpectedly high level of agreement. Conveniently, a positive decision on some of Israel's arms requests was announced the same week.

While there is no reason to be sanguine, I submit that in the light of these events it is a mistake to adopt the pessimism of Mr. Sonenshine and especially that of Mr. Bucovetsky. The administration is learning important lessons, though there are still many unanswered questions about the future of American policy. Basic disagreements continue between Israel and the United States over the Palestinians and over territories—especially on the issue of the West Bank. Israel has still not received the full range of co-production agreements and high-technology weapons systems which it deems necessary to assure a secure defense position, and the United States has blocked the sale of Kfir fighter-bombers to Ecuador for a second time; many in Washington will remain tempted to deter the Russians and to prevent oil-price rises by awarding sophisticated arms to the Arabs. Most important, the thrust toward Geneva will create constant problems, with a recurring potential for faulting Israel for breakdowns or delays rather than accepting U.S. responsibility or facing the risk of blaming the Arabs.

Yet, on balance, the signs seem to have improved since the article appeared. It is still possible that the United States "in spite of itself" will provide the basis for a Munich-type abandonment of Israel at Geneva, as Mr. Sonenshine suggests. But because of the resolve and strength of Israel's government and people, it is not possible that Israel will be obliged to ratify a preordained solution, as Mr. Bucovetsky suggests.

At home, the key to preventing Israel's abandonment remains the vigilance and vitality of Israel's advocates. However, it would be as great an error to give up on Jimmy Carter prematurely as it would be to face the critical issues of the next several months with false optimism. President Carter should be given a chance to prove by his actions that he is as great a supporter of Israel as he claims to be.

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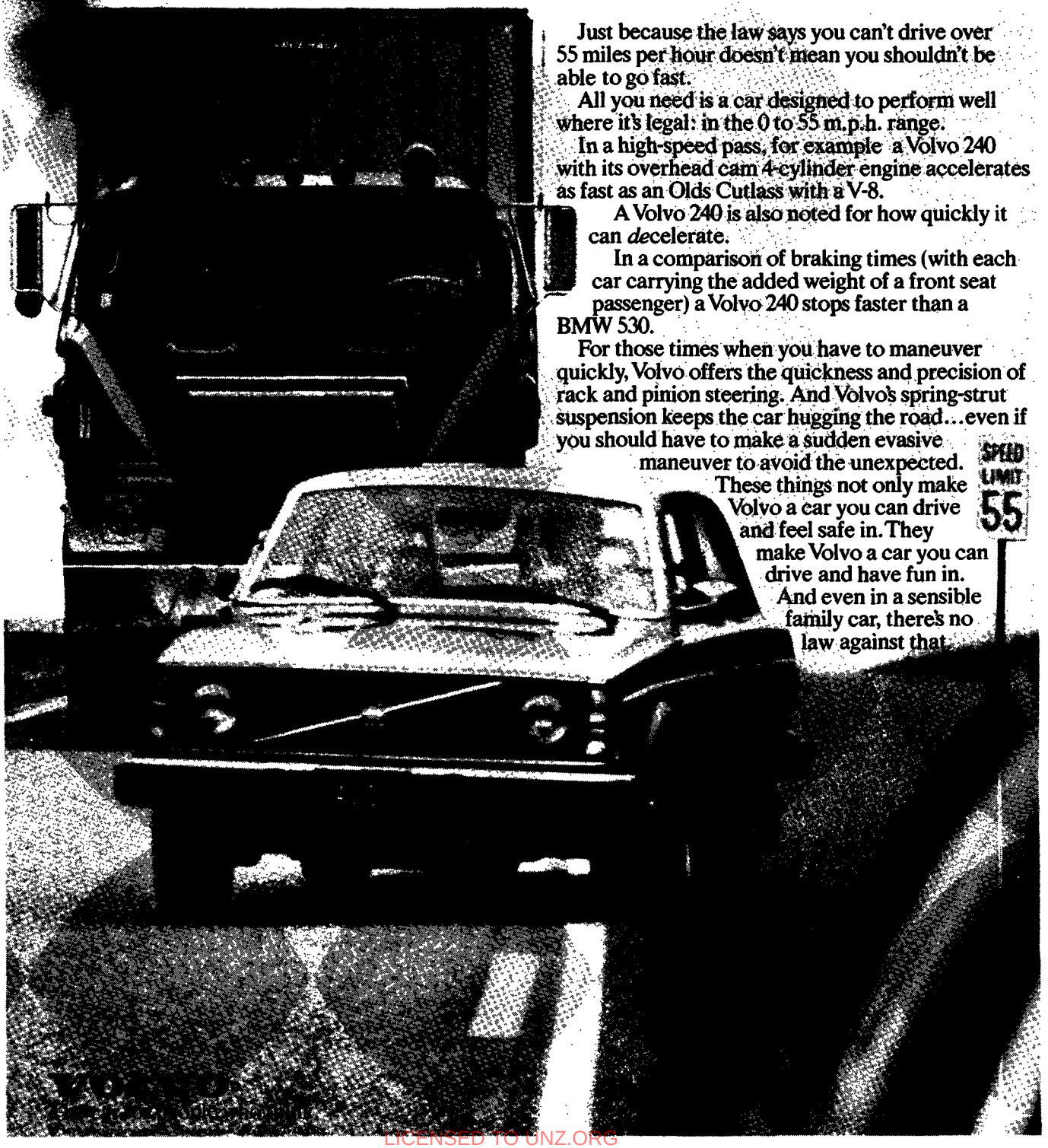

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The War Against the Atom

Samuel McCracken

MOST DISCUSSIONS of nuclear power are conducted in a haze of misinformation: there are few areas of public controversy where so much of what everyone "knows" is not really so. Let us begin with a discussion of a few of the least controversial facts about the processes by which nuclear power is generated. These are neither many nor complicated, but it is essential they be understood as a basis for discussing the somewhat complicated issues that grow out of them.

I

THE PROMISES and problems of nuclear energy rest on the fact that the atoms of some forms of each element are inherently unstable. Each atomic nucleus (except the common form of hydrogen) contains two sorts of particles: protons and neutrons. Protons have a positive electrical charge and neutrons have no charge. In a stable form of an element, the protons and neutrons stay closely bound together in the nucleus. Such forms will remain as they are forever, and are not radioactive. In an unstable form, or isotope, neutrons escape from the nucleus, with two important consequences. The first is that the atom is no longer what it was: it has become a different substance. The second is that the departing neutrons may hit something, with a variety of results. The result that is of interest in the present case is that when a neutron strikes a nucleus of the class called "fissionable" (those of uranium and plutonium are the best known), it may enter the nucleus and cause it to split.

There are three consequences of that split: the atom breaks down into two lighter atoms, known as fission products, typically highly unstable and therefore highly radioactive; other neutrons escape from the nucleus; and there is a release of energy. The other escaping neutrons may strike other nuclei, and these too will split; if enough fissionable material is present, there will be a self-sustaining chain reaction, releasing great amounts of energy. If the mass of fissionable material is great enough, such a chain reaction can, with considerable difficulty, be contained so as to produce an explosion.

A nuclear-power plant of the type now being built or scheduled to be built through this century uses the chain reaction as a source of heat to make steam to operate turbines which spin generators. Apart from the reactor itself, a nuclear-power plant is much like a coal- or oil-fired one.

The fissionable material in most common use is an isotope of uranium: U-235. (The number denotes the total protons and neutrons in the nucleus.) Only .7 per cent of all uranium is of this type; the overwhelming proportion of all uranium in nature is a non-fissionable isotope, U-238. In order to use natural uranium as a fuel, it is necessary to raise the proportion of U-235 in it by a process known as enrichment. Uranium for bombs must be enriched to nearly 90 per cent U-235. In the power reactors used in this country, 3 per cent will do. The enrichment process is extremely complicated and expensive, consuming vast amounts of capital to build and vast amounts of electricity to operate. It also leaves large amounts of non-fissionable U-238 for which there is at present no use.

Among other fissionable elements are thorium, which is more plentiful in nature than uranium, and plutonium, which does not occur in nature except in traces, but which is easily produced in reactors as a by-product. All uranium-burning reactors produce some plutonium incidentally, and plutonium breeder reactors produce it in large quantities deliberately.

There is a considerable variety of possible reactor designs, and the choice among them has become a major issue of public policy. Most of the nuclear reactors in the world today (and, with one exception, all those producing power in the United States) are light-water reactors. In these, ordinary water is circulated around the reactor core and heated by the nuclear reaction, thus serving to cool the core. In one type of light-water reactor, the cooling water is allowed to boil into steam which is piped directly to the generating turbines. This is known as the boiling-water reactor. In another type, the cooling water is kept under pressure, preventing it from boiling, and is piped to a separate steam generator. This is

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known as the pressurized-water reactor. Water also serves the necessary purpose of slowing down the neutrons flowing through the reactor core so that they will be able to split nuclei. For this purpose, the water is called a "moderator," and its presence is no less essential to a chain reaction than the fuel itself. At present, light-water reactors are fueled with U-235, although they can also use plutonium or a mix of plutonium and uranium.

Getting the fuel for a light-water reactor is complicated. Uranium ore must be first processed to produce uranium oxide, known as "yellowcake." This is then converted to uranium hexafluoride, a gaseous form essential to the enrichment process. After enrichment, the uranium hexafluoride is converted to uranium dioxide, and this is fabricated into fuel rods. This series of processes makes up the so-called "front end" of the cycle—that is, before the reactor. Each of these steps in the front end is, with present technology, mandatory for light-water reactors.

After an optimum period in the reactor, spent fuel is ready to be either discarded or reprocessed. It contains, in addition to wastes, unburned uranium and plutonium. In a complete "back end," the uranium and plutonium would be separated from the wastes and fabricated into new fuel that could be used in several ways. The wastes proper would then be disposed of. Currently, however, no fuel is being reprocessed, and it is the position of the Carter administration that none shall be. So the back end of the cycle consists now simply of disposal, and this process is currently being held to its first stage, in which the spent fuel rods are maintained in pools of cooling water at the reactor site.

The light-water reactor is the basis of the U.S. commercial nuclear-power industry; it is also now the most common form in use worldwide. But the first experimental reactors used to generate power were breeders. In a plutonium breeder reactor, the fuel can be either U-235 or Pu-239, used to produce a chain reaction just as in the light-water reactor. But the core of a breeder reactor is surrounded by a "blanket" composed of U-238. Because it can be transmuted by neutron bombardment into plutonium, U-238 is called a "fertile" material. Neutrons escaping from the chain reaction are absorbed by U-238 nuclei, transmuting them first into a highly unstable isotope of uranium, U-239. Almost immediately this decays into a much more long-lived and fissionable isotope of plutonium, Pu-239. This substance is as useful for reactor fuel as U-235.

A plutonium breeder reactor is sometimes said to create more fuel than it uses, something which it of course cannot do without violating physical laws. What it can do is to produce more plutonium from U-238 than it burns. And this has made it both enemies and friends. There are other types of breeder reactors of which the most developed uses the common element thorium to breed the fissionable isotope U-233.

II

BEYOND THESE facts, we enter the world of controversy. The opponents of nuclear power are more or less agreed as to what is wrong with it, and their charges are quickly summarized. These charges have been specified at impressive length in many sources, but as yet there has been no single influential exposition of the case against nuclear power as successful as, say, Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*. Ralph Nader's definitive statement, *The Menace of Atomic Energy*,* has just been published. It is a thorough summary of the case *contra*, and Nader's name on the spine will no doubt assure it a prominent place on the anti-nuclear bookshelf. It is an extraordinarily tendentious work (the "suggestions for further reading" list only firmly anti-nuclear authorities) and I will have something to say about its specific faults later. There is a good deal of useful information along with some dubious analysis in a recent Ford Foundation-sponsored work, *Nuclear Power: Issues and Choices*.† This work appears to underlie most of the Carter administration's nuclear policy. An organization active in opposing nuclear power nationwide has been the Union of Concerned Scientists, based largely at MIT, which, despite its name, does not require one to be a scientist to join and does not record how many of its members are in fact scientists. A Ralph Nader organization called Critical Mass, the Sierra Club, the Friends of the Earth, and the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* have also all been active in opposition. The summary that follows is assembled from these and other sources, since most versions of the critique are interchangeable.**

• The routine operation of power reactors and their fuel cycle is said to be dangerous because such reactors release small amounts of radioactive material into the atmosphere, and it is said that there is unacceptable danger to humans from

* With John Abbotts, Norton, 414 pp., $10.95.

† Ballinger, 418 pp., $6.95 (paper).

** The nuclear bookshelf is growing wider. Among works not mentioned elsewhere in this essay, the most noteworthy —sometimes for useful information, sometimes as specimens of pathology—are Sheldon Novick's *The Electric War*, Sierra Club, 376 pp., $12.50, a very highly undisciplined work whose publisher seems to regard editing as anti-ecological; Jacqui Srouji's *Critical Mass*, Aurora, 409 pp., $11.95, a mixture of good sense, extreme naiveté, and courage, but as undisciplined and unedited on the pro-side as Novick on the anti-; John J. Berger's *Nuclear Power: The Unviable Option*, Ramparts, 366 pp., $4.50 (paper), a canonical brief work against nuclear power; *The Fight Over Nuclear Power*, by Fred H. Schmidt and David Bodansky, Albion, 154 pp., $4.95 (paper), a highly informative and lucid work by two distinguished physicists; Peter Faulkner's *The Silent Bomb*, Vintage/Friends of the Earth, 282 pp., $3.95 (paper), an anthology of snippets, not very clearly identified as such, from other anti-nuclear old-reliables, plus connecting material by Faulkner with some curious scientific errors, a preface by Paul R. Ehrlich which is itself a syllabus of anti-nuclear errors, and a very useful and fair-minded list of the sources of information.

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any amount of radiation, no matter how small.

• It was once alleged falsely that nuclear plants posed the additional danger of accidentally exploding like an atomic bomb, but this charge is now rarely heard, although it is sometimes implied on the jackets of anti-nuclear books. Instead, the most common risk talked about with regard to light-water reactors is that of "meltdown," an accident which may be initiated if the water cooling the reactor core stops flowing. In such an accident, the loss of water removes the moderator and stops the chain reaction itself, but the inherent heat of the radioactive fuel and fission products, if not cooled by water, will cause an inexorable rise in temperature that will eventually melt the fuel and everything beneath it, possibly leading to a serious release of radioactive materials into the atmosphere. In 1965, an Atomic Energy Commission report estimated that the worst possible meltdown accident would kill 27,000 people, injure 73,000, and cause $17 billion in property damage. It is often said that in 1966 the Enrico Fermi reactor near Detroit went into a "partial meltdown" and that in 1975 a fire at the Browns Ferry plant in Alabama came very close to causing a meltdown.

• Plutonium breeder reactors, besides producing plutonium, a fuel alleged to be too dangerous to permit in society, are also said to impose a risk of nuclear explosion.

• It is pointed out that homeowners' insurance policies exclude nuclear accidents, and it is claimed that the risk of such accidents is so great that no company will insure against them.

• Waste disposal sometimes appears even to those who consider nuclear power safe in every other respect to be not only an insoluble problem but so dangerous as to be a sufficient cause for the abolition of nuclear power. The perilousness of nuclear wastes is widely asserted: the fission products of a nuclear reactor are said, besides being uniquely dangerous, to be "the longest-lived" substances known to man, and plutonium, not technically a fission product, has been called "toxic beyond human experience." It is often pointed out that there have been leaks of wastes from the government storage facility at Hanford, Washington, and it is widely contended that there now exists no technology to deal with the wastes that will remain dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years, and that none is now foreseeable. Barry Commoner has spoken of the need for a "nuclear priesthood," dedicated to the safeguarding of nuclear wastes into the infinite future.

• Critics of nuclear power say that nuclear plants are guilty of "thermal pollution," that is, they can raise the temperature of the cooling water they discharge into lakes, rivers, and oceans by many degrees, with catastrophic consequences for aquatic life.

• Critics of nuclear power widely allege that nuclear power is uneconomical, partially because its routine costs are believed to be much higher than for other forms of power generation, and partially because nuclear plants are supposedly much less reliable than other types.

• Nuclear critics claim also that plutonium is a potential boon for terrorists in two ways: first of all, as a poison (a few kilos of plutonium, properly dispersed, could allegedly kill everyone in the world). Secondly, it is often said that a dedicated band of terrorists could acquire enough plutonium to construct their own atomic bomb, with predictably horrific results. To thwart both these dangers, it is maintained that it will be necessary to construct security systems that will amount to a garrison state.

• Finally, it is said that a nuclear-power industry is inextricably tied up with nuclear-weapons proliferation because nations that do not currently have a nuclear-weapons capability will be able to attain one by using plutonium-reactor fuel to make plutonium bombs. The best-known advocate of this view is the person best situated to build it into policy: the President of the United States.

These charges against nuclear power would be terrifying if true. Indeed, were no more than half of them true—or even plausible—nuclear power would almost certainly be too dangerous not only to be a solution to the energy crisis but also too dangerous to be allowed to continue at the present level. If these charges were true, there might even be some sense to the idiotic slogan, "Split wood, not atoms." But they are not true.

III

THE BELIEF that a functioning nuclear reactor and its fuel cycle pose a radiation threat illustrates a common habit among the anti-nuclear lobby: holding nuclear reactors to a standard of safety that if generalized would forbid not only all other forms of power generation, but also most of the things man makes or finds in nature.

The standard measure of the biological effect of radiation upon humans is the "roentgen equivalent man," abbreviated rem. The most commonly used sub-unit is the millirem, abbreviated mrem. The International Commission on Radiological Protection's limit for annual exposure per person is 500 mrem a year. This is a conservative limit, and there are areas in the world where people are naturally exposed to as much as 1,500 mrem a year without apparent damage.

The first thing to understand is that exposure to radiation is an inescapable consequence of living on the earth: we are all exposed to "background radiation" from natural sources, including radioactive minerals such as uranium, and cosmic rays. In the United States this exposure ranges from as high as 175 mrem a year to as little as 50, depending on location. The U.S. average is 130 mrem. Radioactive materials such as granite, which is—in these exquisitely sensitive contexts—highly radioactive, add 10 mrem or so a year. Petr Beckmann

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of the University of Colorado* has pointed out that if Grand Central Station were to be held to the Nulear Regulatory Commission standards for reactors, it could not be licensed. There is, additionally, approximately 120 mrem a year more in man-made radiation. Most of this comes from x-rays and other medical sources. Fallout accounts for 4 mrem a year, and color television for about 1 mrem. Nuclear plants add, in the United States, approximately .003 mrem a year. Without nuclear plants, the average American absorbs 250 mrem a year; with nuclear plants, he absorbs 250.003 mrem.

It is often argued by nuclear critics that radiation is so dangerous that *no* addition to the natural background is tolerable. If this be so, then it is a little hard to know why the critics are concentrating on nuclear plants. If one lives next to the property line of a nuclear reactor, the NRC permits an added exposure of 5 mrem a year. The added risk of cancer is equal to that imposed by smoking one cigarette a year.

These doses are perhaps put in perspective by the fact that a single chest x-ray adds some 50 mrem, and simply flying from New York to Los Angeles 5 mrem. Worse still, if one moves from Dallas to Denver, the additional annual exposure is nearly 100 mrem: that is, 20 times the radiation permitted to the neighbor of an operating nuclear plant. This is simply the consequence of Denver's altitude. The practical effect of all this extra radiation is perhaps to be noted in the fact that Colorado's cancer incidence is *lower* than the national average.

Bernard Cohen of the University of Pittsburgh† has provided a neat illustration of the real risk from the emissions of a nuclear reactor. If one lives at its property line, and wishes to move away in order to escape the risks of the 5-mrem-a-year which is the maximum emission permitted—in practice, no reactor comes near the permitted maximum—one must take care not to move to a house more than 500 feet further away from one's place of work. If one does, the increased risk from auto accident will outweigh the decreased risk from radiation.

Although the opponents of nuclear power talk as if it were generally accepted that minute amounts of radiation result in genetic damage to human beings, it is not generally realized that this assumption rests on laboratory results with animals that appear to be contradicted by actual experience with humans. At Hiroshima and Nagasaki, thousands of humans were exposed to levels of radiation that not even the harshest critic of nuclear power believes can come from a reactor. Thirty years later, there has been no detectable increase in genetic damage among the offspring of this population.

There are undoubtedly risks of cancer from exposure to radiation. That they are in any event tiny is evident from the fact that any number of highly radioactive (but non-industrialized) sections of the country combine high background radiation with low cancer rates. The important point is that nuclear reactors, routinely operated, are among the most negligible emitters of radiation, and thus among the most negligible causes of cancer from radiation.

The truth is that cigarette smokers pose a greater risk of cancer to their neighbors than all the nuclear plants in the country: and any smoker who opposes nuclear power on the grounds that it is carcinogenic lives in the grip of a potentially explosive contradiction.

So much for the dangers posed by routine operation of a nuclear reactor and the fuel cycle; those posed by accidents are a more complicated matter. By far the most serious accident possible in a light-water reactor is the so-called meltdown. A meltdown would begin with a break in one of the pipes carrying heated water or steam from the reactor core to a heat exchanger or a turbine. All reactors have redundant systems to supply emergency cooling water, but if all these were to fail, even though the lack of a moderator would shut down the chain reaction, the heat growing out of the fission products contained in the core would no longer be carried away, and the fuel would begin to melt. The stainless-steel pres-

* Beckmann publishes *Access to Energy*, a witty and profoundly informative newsletter on the nuclear debate and new energy technologies. His book, *The Health Hazards of NOT Going Nuclear* (Golem Press, 190 pp., $10.95 hardbound, $5.95 softbound), combines vigorous polemic and a wealth of information. Both the newsletter and the book are available from Box 2298-H, Boulder, Colorado 80302.

† It is symptomatic of the situation that Cohen is not a better known figure outside his professional field. A distinguished physicist who has been president of the nuclear division of the American Physical Society and who is also a graceful, lucid, and thoughtful writer, Cohen has published a number of devastatingly thorough analyses of nuclear safety. These have attracted much less popular attention than routine yelps of hysteria from scientific illiterates. It is especially regrettable that Cohen's *Nuclear Science and Society* (Anchor, 1974), an admirable introduction to the subject, should have gone out of print.

Curiously, some nuclear opponents make a virtue of ignorance, maintaining that experts in the nuclear area have a commitment that prevents objectivity, and that experts in nuclear industry should stay out of the debate because of conflict of interest. This attempt to exclude the opposition conveniently overlooks the fact that many leading opponents of nuclear energy themselves earn their living by opposing it. Although a nuclear engineer will not advance his career by becoming a nuclear critic, he need not become a nuclear publicist in order to draw paychecks. A professional critic, by contrast, lives quite directly by opposing nuclear energy. He is like a public-relations officer in the nuclear industry, and one ought to apply some skepticism to his alleged disinterestedness, as well as to that of "environmental" lawyers. One should be especially skeptical of anti-nuclear "martyrs": speaking of three General Electric engineers who resigned over the issue of nuclear safety, Paul Ehrlich praises their "sacrifices." He does not note that when they resigned they had become members of a para-religious organization that guarantees them an income should anti-nuclear activities prove insufficiently lucrative. They are also reported to be continuing their participation in the General Electric profit-sharing plan.

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sure vessel, covering the reactor proper, is designed to contain the effects of this, but if it should fail, the domed containment structure is made to hold in the various radioactive products dispersed within it. Only if this containment structure fails—and it is designed to withstand the impact from a crashing jetliner—would there be a release of radioactive material into the atmosphere. What would happen next depends on the location of the reactor and on the weather. The consequences would range from none to very serious ones indeed. There would be none if a minimum of radioactivity were released and it were widely dispersed over sparsely populated areas. And there would be very serious results if a great deal of radioactivity were emitted and it were dispersed in a concentrated fashion over densely populated areas.

Now, although there is some disagreement as to the precise magnitude of casualties in the worst possible meltdown disaster, all parties agree that the worst possible meltdown disaster would be a major one. The real disagreement comes on probabilities, which are essential to understanding the real risk of anything. In general, the worse the accident the less the probability. The worst possible airline accident, for example, would be something like a fully-loaded 747 crashing into the Rose Bowl on New Year Day, an event which might kill perhaps 30,000 people. The worst possible electric-power generation accident would be not a nuclear meltdown but the failure of a hydroelectric dam at the head of a heavily populated valley. This might kill as many as a quarter of a million people and destroy many billions of dollars' worth of property. If such an accident were very much less probable than a meltdown, we might discount the fact that it threatens a much higher death toll. As it happens, the dam accident is substantially *more* likely than a major meltdown accident.

IN 1975, the Atomic Energy Commission published a study that attempted to calculate the risks of a meltdown, the Reactor Safety Study (RSS), known at the Rasmussen report from its director, Norman Rasmussen of MIT. The RSS concludes that the maximum credible light-water reactor accident would result in 3,300 deaths immediately, with 45,000 deaths from cancer over a period of thirty years, and $14 billion in property damage. It also concludes that the chance of such an accident is vanishingly remote, perhaps 10,000 times smaller than similar death tolls from such disasters as dam failures and tropical storms. The probability that, with 100 reactors operating, 1,000 people would be killed in a single accident is the same as for 1,000 people being killed by a single meteorite—once every billion years.

The RSS has been subjected to very severe criticism from both the American Physical Society and the Union of Concerned Scientists. Among the most telling claims made against it are that the system of analysis it uses was developed to predict relative, but not absolute, safety, and that the report pays inadquate regard to the possibility that failure in one component may lead to failure in another, as when water spilling from a broken pipe disables a safety device. It is not necessary to accept all the criticisms made of the report (for instance, that it ignores sabotage) to see that its critics have raised substantial questions about the validity of its predictions.

If the probabilities predicted by the RSS were not themselves so remote, however—that with 100 reactors operating, one person would be killed by them once every two centuries—the criticism would be more disturbing. As it stands, there is much sense in the conclusion reached by the Ford Foundation report, which is that although the risks of a meltdown may be greater than indicated in the RSS, they are still very remote. Moreover, they are not greater in likelihood and intensity than risks society already accepts and has learned to live with. In this century, the Ford Foundation report notes, the United States has already seen two hurricanes that have taken over a thousand lives each and resulted in billions of dollars of property damage.

Still, it should be obvious that we need a reactor-safety study in whose judgments there will be widespread confidence. Such a study, moreover, should compare the relative risks of light-water reactors to other types. If whatever risks inhere in the light-water reactor turn out to be substantially idiosyncratic to it, rather than typical of nuclear power, we need to know that.

THE plutonium breeder is alleged to present even more serious safety problems than the light-water reactor. The principal allegation about the operation of the reactor itself is that should it suffer a meltdown, it is possible for the melted plutonium fuel to reassemble itself in such a way as to achieve critical mass and undergo a nuclear explosion. The technical community is divided on this issue, and it would be foolish in the face of such division for a layman to maintain that it could not happen. But it is important to understand what it would involve and how unlikely it is.

There is as yet no body of data on operating plutonium breeders that would allow any hard assessment of the risks of a meltdown. But the design of such reactors makes it very unlikely. The liquid sodium coolant is circulated at very low pressure, which makes a pipe rupture less probable in prospect and less serious in actuality. So a loss-of-coolant accident is very unlikely, as is the prospect that all emergency systems would fail. Even if they did, it is not certain that the fuel would reassemble so as to form a critical mass, and any explosion that did occur would be of a different order from a bomb explosion. Reactor-grade plutonium is heavily contaminated with Pu-240, which makes it a bad weapons material. (Nuclear critics consistently mislabel reactor plutonium as "weapons-grade." While it can be used to make bombs, they are highly inefficient and likely to explode prema-

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turely. There is a weapons-grade plutonium, but it is pure Pu-239, and it is not produced in power reactors.) Further, since much of the art of making an atomic bomb lies in the elaborate mechanisms to contain the explosion long enough for it to build up, an accidental reassembly would lead to a fizzle rather than a real explosion. It is probable that such an "explosion" would be held within a containment structure. The risk of such an explosion occurring and releasing radiation must be akin to that of being hit by a meteorite.

An overheating incident in 1966 at the Fermi breeder plant near Detroit has been the subject of John G. Fuller's extremely ignorant and sensational book, *We Almost Lost Detroit.** Space and life are too short to catalogue the errors of this work, but it is perhaps sufficient to note that Fuller regularly characterizes the liquid sodium coolant, actually less viscous than water, as "syrup-like," and he paints a picture of the site of the plant, eight years after the accident, still contaminated by radioactive sodium. In fact, the preponderant and most dangerous isotope created in a breeder's coolant, Na-24, has a half-life of fifteen hours. It was effectively nonexistent a month after the reactor shut down. Even the much less dangerous Na-22, produced in far smaller quantities, has a half-life of only thirty months and was thus greatly reduced in amount after eight years had passed. Others have followed and expanded upon Fuller's errors in this work. One is often told that the accident nearly involved a meltdown, although the plant did not yet contain enough fission products for this, and that it is now inoperative, without being told that it was an experimental reactor closed only after having been successfully repaired and restarted.

The tale of the Fermi reactor is the tale of a major reactor that suffered a very serious accident without a single human injury, much less a death. Citing it as proof that nuclear energy is too dangerous is like trying to prove that cars are too dangerous by citing examples of safety belts working.

But the case for the breeder is more than a negation of the case against it. The true potential of the breeder is almost never conceded by nuclear critics. For it could do more than allow us to outlast the present supply of uranium in the ground. Since it allows the conversion of our presently useless stock of already mined U-238, it would allow us to generate electricity for several hundred years without mining another ounce of fuel. This is what an all-breeder generating capacity would mean—true energy independence for the United States and the saving of thousands of lives in the mines.

THE PRINCIPLE of the half-truth is nowhere better illustrated than in the anti-nuclear movement's discussion of insurance. It is true that homeowners' insurance policies exclude damage because of nuclear accidents. But this is because nuclear accidents are separately covered under insurance set up by the Price-Anderson Act. Under the Act, a coverage is established of $560 million per accident. A portion of this—currently $140 million—is covered by insurance purchased from private insurance companies. The balance is covered by insurance purchased from the federal government. By 1980, the private companies will have gradually taken over the entire coverage, and as new plants are built, the limit will be raised. And should an accident occur, all operating plants will be assessed a retrospective charge of $5 million.

The critics' perennial question—"If a major accident that would cost $17 billion is so extraordinarily remote, why won't the insurance companies sell insurance for it?"—is easily answered. Although the extreme case is highly unlikely over any span of years, it could—however unlikely this may be—occur tomorrow. Although no premium would have been paid remotely covering the cost, the cost would have to be paid. And because a major nuclear accident would make the death of the whole industry a high probability, there would be little chance of recovering the cost out of future premiums. A similar principle applies to the insuring of fireworks displays: the premium drops proportional to the experience and future stability of the firm lighting the fuse.

Should a nuclear accident occur beyond the insured limits, it seems very likely that the Congress would provide retrospective compensation. It must also be noted that Price-Anderson insurance is superior to other insurance in two respects: for the great majority of likely accidents, it would pay full compensation to the victims, and unlike all other disaster insurance, the premium is paid not by the beneficiary but by a third party.

IT IS evident that the single most frightening charge made against nuclear energy is that it produces extraordinarily dangerous wastes that must be guarded for millions of years. The anti-nuclear lobby calls on us to remember our obligations to our descendants, and regularly tells us that we have as yet devised no means to deal with the waste problem. No part of the anti-nuclear dogma is more suffused with ignorance, sensationalism, and downright dishonesty than this charge.

To begin with, the actual danger posed by these wastes is grossly exaggerated. The wastes are of two general types. Fission products, elements lighter than uranium and highly radioactive, are the debris of the split nuclei and have comparatively short half-lives. These are also called "high-level wastes." Transuranics, elements heavier than uranium, are caused by its irradiation and have long half-lives. These are also called "low-level wastes."

The best-known of the transuranics is plutonium, and it is also the most sensationalized. It is

* Ballantine, 288 pp., $1.95 (paper).

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said to have been named for "Pluto, the god of hell," a statement which is erroneous as to fact (it was named by astronomical analogy as the element beyond Neptunium) and ignorant of the Greco-Roman notion of Hades. It is regularly said to be the most toxic substance known to man, and sometimes even to be toxic beyond human experience. It is hard to disagree with Petr Beckmann's characterization of such statements as "melodramatic piffle."

It should be first observed that plutonium is a waste substance only if it is not used as a fuel. If it be a waste substance requiring long-term storage it is only because we make it so. Plutonium is of course a very toxic substance, but it is not uniquely so. Bernard Cohen has estimated that if the entire electric-power industry of the United States operated with fast breeder reactors, the annual production of plutonium would, if dispersed with maximum efficiency and then inhaled, be sufficient to cause 1 trillion deaths. This indeed sounds terrifying. But two things must be remembered. First, the annual production of plutonium could not possibly be dispersed with such efficiency. Second, we routinely handle far more dangerous substances: our present annual production of hydrogen cyanide, if similarly dispersed and inhaled, would cause 6 trillion deaths; our annual production of ammonia, 8 trillion; our annual production of phosgene, 18 trillion; and our annual production of chlorine, no fewer than 400 trillion deaths.

Cohen also points out that there is more danger to us from the radium deposited in the earth's crust than from prospective plutonium production. Specifically, if all the present generating capacity were fired by fast breeder reactors producing as much plutonium as they consumed, the total amount of plutonium in existence would be no more radioactive than the radium that already exists in a little over half a foot of the earth's crust. Even this comparison overstates the danger from plutonium. When ingested, naturally-occurring radium is 40 times as toxic as plutonium, and it is a source of the dangerous radioactive gas, radon. If we correct for this, we will see that all the plutonium produced by an all-breeder power system would, if dispersed throughout the earth's crust, be no more dangerous than the radium occurring naturally in *4 mm* of that crust. It should hardly need pointing out that this plutonium would not be dispersed throughout the environment, but would be in reactors and processing plants.

Nor, in looking for things that are more poisonous than plutonium, need one confine oneself to naturally occurring radioactive substances. Arsenic trioxide when ingested is 50 times more toxic than plutonium, and we import this insecticide in quantities that would exceed the wastes from an all-nuclear economy. And we spray it about very nearly at random and have no plans whatsoever for disposing of it in any manner.

Plutonium is, additionally, often characterized by such terms as "searingly radioactive," a phrase recently applied to it by *Time*. This is exceptionally ignorant and misleading. Plutonium radiation consists of alpha particles, and these are stopped by a sheet of paper or a few inches of air. Indeed, they are stopped by the epidermis, and pose a threat to humans only when ingested or inhaled. Their principal threat is as a carcinogen, and there is general agreement that in this regard plutonium is extremely potent. The depth of the extremity is a matter for debate, but no one regards the problem as something to be ignored. For a society that tolerates cigarettes to use this hazard as an excuse for rejecting the extraordinary benefits of plutonium is lunatic.

Further, a great deal is made of plutonium's half-life of 24,000 years. (This is the half-life of its most common isotope, Pu-239. Its other isotopes have half-lives ranging from less than a second to 80 million years.) It is, on this basis, frequently called "one of the longest-lived substances known to man." This characterization is particularly idiotic. For one thing, it obscures the fact that the longer-lived a radioactive substance is, the less dangerous its radiation is—for it emits radiation at a lower rate. Fission products—high-level wastes—have comparatively short half-lives because they decay at so furious a rate. But the characterization obscures something even more important: radioactive poisons are the only poisons that have half-lives as *short* as 24,000, or even 80 million, years. Stable isotopes are eternal and have *infinite* half-lives. A gram of plutonium will eventually end up as slightly less than a gram of lead. A gram of arsenic will always be a gram of arsenic.

The Union of Concerned Scientists has issued a brochure which describes the alleged qualities of certain high-level wastes, and then cites, as if it applied to these same wastes, a government estimate for a very large amount of nuclear wastes to be created by the year 2000. But the UCS suppresses the fact that the government's estimate applies not to high-level wastes, but to *low-level* wastes, which are so feeble in radiation that they can be buried in trenches.

BUT THESE confusions and misstatements pale beside those made about the state of waste-disposal technology. A principal stock-in-trade of the anti-nuclear lobby is a series of leaks of high-level wastes from storage tanks at the government's Hanford, Washington facility. These leaks, deplorable enough in themselves, are regularly cited as representative of the risks in current techniques. One is never told that the tanks in question are of early postwar design, and have long since been superseded. It is as if the safety record of the railroads in 1845, when accidents were very common, had been used in 1925 to justify closing them down.

The most common assertion one hears in this area, however, is the flat statement that we do not

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now know how to dispose of high-level wastes, which must be isolated from contact with the biosphere for many thousands of years. This challenge has already been met, and the endlessly repeated statement that it has not is the nearest equivalent in the debate over nuclear power to a classic Big Lie.

The technology for disposal, which has been demonstrated in a pilot project at Hanford, and actually used in Europe, involves first "calcining" the waste to a sand-like substance of greatly reduced bulk, and then using this "sand" as a component to make glass. The resulting glass is radioactive but chemically inert. It can then be buried deep in geologically stable salt formations, where no water has flowed for millions of years. It will require no surveillance, let alone a "nuclear priesthood." If there were an immediate need for such storage, it would no doubt have already been implemented. But the fact is that there are not now enough wastes in inventory to make such a process economical, and there will not be for some years. It thus makes good sense to keep existing wastes in temporary storage and to hold up on final disposal while an already adequate technology is improved.

Most anti-nuclear prophets simply ignore this process or lump it together with a number of purely speculative suggestions, such as launching wastes by rocket into the sun. Nader and Abbotts ignore it except to quote an outdated press release of the Energy Research and Development Administration noting that it will not work for ERDA's inventory of weapons waste. The problem has now been corrected by a new process developed at Hanford. But in any event, Nader and Abbotts conveniently omit to note that this problem was never applicable to existing or prospective wastes from power reactors. And although they cite the problem as an example of ERDA's inability to manage "its own" wastes, they do not note that the neutralization of military wastes that led to the problem was carried out long before there was an ERDA. It is this sort of thing which raises grave doubts about Ralph Nader's secular sanctity. The best that can be said for such tactics is that they belong to an advocate whose concern is not with truth but propaganda.

Elsewhere in their discussion of waste disposal, Nader and Abbotts make the claim that technology cannot guarantee geologically stable areas in which to deposit wastes. This is true but irrelevant. Nature provides such areas and technology can locate them. Nader and Abbotts misleadingly suggest that a false start at finding such an area in Kansas means that none exists. Had Nader been operating in the early 19th century, the railways would have had a very hard time getting started.

It is not surprising that anti-nuclear advocates should wish to perpetuate the lie that wastes are an insoluble problem. As they themselves often note, the issue is perhaps the strongest they have going for them, and it must be a terrible thought that some interfering scientist somewhere may have gone and solved it.

THE "thermal pollution" charge laid at the door of nuclear power plants is a mixture of half-truth, exaggeration, and gross sentimentality. First of all, the root phenomenon is not peculiar to nuclear plants. All thermal-power plants waste a great deal of heat and must dispose of it, generally into bodies of water or through cooling towers into the atmosphere. Light-water reactors have a slightly lower thermal efficiency than fossil-fuel plants, and therefore discharge more heat, but breeder reactors are at least as efficient as fossil-fueled plants. If "thermal pollution" is really an argument for rejecting nuclear energy, it is also an argument for rejecting most of our electricity.

The most commonly attacked "thermal pollution" involves the discharge of waste heat into bodies of water. The critics are fond of citing the temperature rise at the discharge exit, which may be as high as 70 degrees. They are less fond of citing the temperature rise over a few hundred square feet, which will be only a degree or two.

But even this slight change will have an effect on the aquatic life near a reactor, as it makes the water an unsuitable environment for some species. In doing so, however, it makes it more suitable for other species. Lobsters, for example, thrive in the slightly warmed water near a reactor.

When a reactor shuts down, as for refueling, a species that has moved into warm water may have difficulty in surviving a temporary cooling of the water. Much has been made of the fact that menhaden, fish important in fertilizer and pet food, are enticed into the slightly warmed waters near reactors located on the Atlantic and then killed off when the water cools during a shutdown. A not dissimilar phenomenon occurs when the elderly of the species *homo* die of cold during a natural-gas shortage, but of this we hear little. If we had no need of energy, it would perhaps be possible to let our hearts bleed for the menhaden, who no doubt prefer ending up as fertilizer or cat food to death by thermal pollution. But the fact is that our need for safe energy is crucial, and it is only those who have never known what it is like to be without energy who can seriously contemplate a brutal policy of sacrificing human interests to those of fish. In a related piece of folly, the opponents of the Seabrook plant in New Hampshire have opposed its cooling system on the grounds that it would inhale and destroy a certain diet of aquatic life each day. The amount involved is about what three or four whales consume, but one does not hear the same people urging a moratorium on the existence of whales.

"Thermal pollution," in short, is a bugbear invented to cover for the embarrassing fact that nuclear-power plants do not assault the environment with the same ferocity as such putatively safe energy sources as coal. "Thermal pollution" is com-

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mon to all thermal plants; it can be taken seriously only by indulging a studied contempt for human welfare in the interests, real or otherwise, of marine life.

THE ECONOMIC argument against nuclear power is made in multifarious ways. Sometimes it appears to grow out of simple ignorance, as when the utilities are alleged to prefer expensive nuclear plants because with great capital investment higher rates can be charged, quite as if that capital did not have to be recovered out of income. Sometimes it is based on the implied assumption that the government ought never to subsidize the development of a new technology, as when it is objected that the government does not make a profit on its fuel-enrichment operation. Those who make this charge have not been heard to object to the government subsidy of mass transport through Amtrak and the Urban Mass Transit Administration. Sometimes it is based on manipulation of the facts, as when figures for Western low-sulfur coal burned near the mine in comparatively cheap power plants are misapplied to plants burning high-sulfur coal in very expensive scrubber-equipped plants. And sometimes it is based on the lurid charge that the total energy needed to build and operate a nuclear plant is greater than what it produces—that the nuclear industry has made no net addition to the nation's energy supply. In fact, building and operating a light-water plant, including the enrichment of its fuel, uses 6 per cent of its lifetime output. A coal-fired plant uses between 6.7 and 7.8 per cent, depending on whether it burns surface or deep-mined coal. There is hardly a better example of the disparity that exists between the anti-nuclear gospel and simple reality.

But the most reprehensible form of the argument is that nuclear plants are less reliable than other types. Part of this charge is based on a half-truth, namely, that stringent safety standards require these plants to be shut down for comparatively trivial reasons, and that the discovery of a problem in one plant may lead to a temporary shutdown in all plants of the same general type. Such incidents are sometimes badly misreported: thus, when a hairline crack, releasing no water or radioactivity, was discovered in a standby cooling pipe at the Commonwealth Edison Dresden plant near Chicago, 23 plants with similar standby systems were ordered to close down for inspection. No cracks were found in any of them, but the incident was reported widely as one in which 23 plants had been shut down because of cracks in their cooling systems. Less widely reported is the fact that Commonwealth Edison's nuclear plants have proved just as reliable as its coal plants.

Still more dubious is the practice of stating reliability factors for nuclear plants in isolation, without comparing them to other types, and comparing them to much smaller conventional plants.

The fact is that over the nation, nuclear reactors are about as reliable as fossil plants of equivalent size. There are two basic measures of reliability: the availability factor, which measures the proportion of the time a generator is actually ready to generate electricity, and the capacity factor, which measures the proportion of capacity actually used. It is the capacity factor that is significant for the economics of power generation. In 1975 and 1976, nuclear plants used to generate base loads attained a higher capacity than either coal or oil plants used for the same purpose. In the same years, the nuclear plants attained availability factors a few percentage points less than coal and oil. And if fossil-fuel plants were held to safety standards as rigorous as nuclear plants, they would post a still lower availability factor. Indeed, as still unreliable scrubbers become more common on coal-fired plants, this is just what will happen.

In their summation of the economic issues, Nader and Abbotts maintain that

> a definitive statement on nuclear economics is the number of plants that have been cancelled or deferred. By November 1975, 130,000 megawatts-electric had been cancelled or deferred, representing over two-thirds of all cancellations or deferrals of power plants within the industry.

This is statistical demagoguery; such figures are meaningless except in context. First of all, when a utility defers a nuclear plant, it does so because it plans to delay the adding of new capacity that had already been planned for. Recently such deferrals have occurred because the rate of growth in demand has finally slowed and we are not going to need capacity that before the energy crisis it seemed reasonable to plan for. But a deferral is not a vote of no-confidence in nuclear power: to the contrary, it is a statement that when there is adequate demand to employ a new plant, it will be nuclear rather than otherwise. Nader and Abbotts thus make an especially perverse use of the fact that nuclear plants have been deferred. And although utilities cancel power plants for a variety of reasons, most do so because of reduced demand projections. Had the electric industry, in the days when it was placing orders for future demand, regarded nuclear power as the *only* form worth ordering, it would have placed even more orders for nuclear plants, and would now be cancelling even more nuclear capacity. But the fact that "100 per cent of all capacity deferred or cancelled has been nuclear" would then derive from the industry's confidence in nuclear power as opposed to other forms, not its mistrust of nuclear economics.

The statistics that really would be indicative of such mistrust would be the megawattage of nuclear capacity cancelled *and replaced by some other form of generation*. We should not hold our breath waiting for Nader to publish this figure. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission reports that no utility, having applied for a permit to build a nuclear reactor, has ever cancelled the nuclear

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plant in favor of a fossil-fuel plant. That is the measure of the industry's confidence in nuclear power.

Nor should we expect Nader to publish an accounting of the net cost to householders of "environmentalist" delaying tactics. Each stage in the approval and construction of a nuclear plant is now routinely opposed by organizations of nuclear critics. The heavy legal fees thus incurred by the utilities end up on the electric bill. Still worse is the inflationary cost exacted by delay. Almost as sure as death and taxes is the continuing rise in construction costs. The anti-nuclear lobby delights in quoting cost overruns, but rarely notes the influence on these of the delays which they work to cause. These costs too are borne by consumers and are cruelly regressive upon the poor, a bit of brutal condescension from the middle classes where anti-nuclear sentiment is strongest.

THE anti-nuclear lobby works to ban plutonium—that substance which contains more energy for its volume than any other—on the spurious ground that it will inevitably be stolen and used by terrorists. Plutonium is alleged to be a ready tool for these gentry in two forms: as a poison and as bomb material. The difficulties in acquiring a stock of the substance are the same in either case.

They are immense. The only time plutonium is vulnerable is after it has been separated in a reprocessing plant and before it is loaded into a reactor. At any other time, it is so poisoned by fission products as to be both dangerous and useless. It would be practically impossible to smuggle plutonium out of a facility in little bits. Because it is radioactive, plutonium on the person is detectable in amounts as small as a gram. In order to extract the minimum ten kilograms needed for a bomb, a smuggler would need to execute at least 10,000 separate thefts.

A recent demonstration in which an army assault team using mortars and high explosives required fourteen hours to get into a plutonium depository suggests the unlikelihood of covert theft from stationary deposits. This means that the plutonium would have to be hijacked from a convoy. The difficulties here are extraordinary. Hijacking a shipment of plutonium on the way to a reactor would, oxymoronically, have to be a covert semi-military operation. Plutonium has long been shipped in this country as part of weapons production, and formidable precautions have been developed. These include radio tracking of the trucks, devices that disable the trucks if hijacked, and escort vehicles carrying armed guards. A group of terrorists equipped to overwhelm such a convoy would be better advised to steal a tactical nuclear warhead ready-made. They would be mad to expend their energies on stealing unsatisfactory material for a bomb design that might not work and that might well explode prematurely and blow them up.

For it is essential to realize that building a plutonium bomb is a feat that has to date been accomplished by only a handful of nation-states. It ought to be readily apparent that there is very little likelihood of a small band of terrorists accomplishing what India accomplished only with difficulty.

As a matter of fact, building a bomb from plutonium-reactor fuel is a task even more difficult than that accomplished by the Indians. For reactor-grade plutonium, although primarily composed of Pu-239, is heavily contaminated with Pu-240, which can cause a bomb to explode prematurely and fizzle. The original discovery of Pu-240 very nearly ended the Manhattan Project.

One disturbing fact is that it probably will not matter whether plutonium *is* an ideal substance for terrorism as long as enough people *think* it is. If most people in New York City can be persuaded to believe that a few kilograms of plutonium can be so distributed as to kill them all, it will be appreciably harder for any government to resist demands made by terrorists allegedly wielding substantial amounts of plutonium. It can be seen that prospective terrorists are getting a good deal of help from those who go about spreading lurid falsehoods about the toxicity of plutonium and the ease with which the plutonium in reactors can be made into bombs.

A related fright widely merchandised is that safeguarding plutonium from terrorists requires a police state that will inevitably destroy our civil liberties. This view ignores the fact that we are already shipping plutonium around the country in substantial quantities for military purposes, that it is not hijacked, and that we have had to establish no repressive mechanism to achieve this result. It is possible that establishing a system to track down terrorists who make sensational but false claims involving plutonium as a poison or a bomb might require such a mechanism, but that problem will exist whether terrorists acquire plutonium or not, and is in any event largely the creature of the anti-nuclear movement.

Nuclear proliferation is, of course, an excellent thing to be against because so few people are for it. The problem is that it is very doubtful that U.S. energy policy can have any effect whatever on the course of nuclear proliferation. The most obvious reason for this is that those countries that lack a backstop of coal and oil—France first among them—will develop breeder technology for their own needs whether we do so or not, and will finance that development by exporting breeder technology. There is simply no possibility that the United States can prohibit the worldwide production of plutonium by sitting on the breeder reactor. Indeed, it cannot sit on the breeder because the French, with their Superphénix, are rushing to commercialize it.

Moreover, diverting plutonium from a power reactor is a highly inefficient way of making plutonium suitable for weapons. It is far more

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efficient to use a research reactor for the purpose, and as a matter of fact that is precisely how the Indians appear to have made the plutonium for their bomb: in a research—not a power—reactor supplied them by Canada. This fact is obscured by constant misstatements to the contrary by people who should know better, including the *New Republic*'s TRB. And the United States, having no monopoly on research reactors, is just as powerless to prevent nuclear proliferation by putting an embargo on them.

The prevention of nuclear proliferation is a very serious problem, but it must be solved on its own terms if it is to be solved at all. It cannot be solved by false nostrums that require the adoption of a suicidal energy policy. It *might* be solved, though, by the adoption of reactor systems that do not lend themselves at all to bomb production. One of these, the gas-fueled reactor, is fueled only with non-fissionable material, and never has more than a few kilograms of fissionable uranium in its core at one time. This is still in the design stages, but there is another reactor design that is not only very hard to adapt for bombs but is actually now in use and development: the Canadian heavy-water reactor known as the CANDU. This reactor has a form of water as coolant and moderator that contains deuterium, a heavy isotope of hydrogen, rather than normal hydrogen. The superior moderating abilities of heavy water permit the employment of natural unenriched uranium, useless as bomb material, as the fuel, and such a reactor needs no expensive and complicated enrichment plant. Because it uses pressure tubes in its boiler rather than the tea-kettle design common to light-water reactors, even the theoretical likelihood of a loss-of-coolant accident is tiny, and its possible consequences far smaller. The CANDU core design also enables it to be refueled without being shut down, thus allowing a theoretical availability of 100 per cent. There are a number of CANDU reactors generating power in Canada at extraordinary proportions of capacity.

The CANDU design is adaptable to a number of fuel cycles. The Canadian nuclear industry is now turning its attention to modifying the CANDU to operate on the thorium-uranium cycle. In this cycle, the plentiful fertile thorium is bred to the fissile uranium which is then burned as fuel without being removed from the reactor. Such a CANDU reactor could gain the advantages of the plutonium breeder while avoiding even the residual dangers of plutonium.

If the anti-nuclear lobby were genuinely and intelligently interested in safer energy sources that do not raise even hypothetical problems of nuclear proliferation, it would be urging ERDA to acquire a CANDU reactor for demonstration-and-development purposes.

IF THE risks of nuclear energy are very much less than its critics allege, they are still not negligible, and indeed would be sufficient ground for its rejection if there were a workable technology with fewer risks. But it is in comparison with the alternative that nuclear energy really begins to shine. Far from being our most dangerous source of energy, nuclear energy is our safest.

The widely-held impression to the contrary depends on a habit of forgetting the actual deaths caused by existing technologies, and comparing the void thereby created with hypothetical deaths caused by nuclear energy. As we have seen, the hypothetical deaths of nuclear energy are still no more than that. But the actual deaths caused by other technologies are countable and many.

We can begin with coal. Coal-fired electricity now costs a great many lives each year, a figure, even on the most conservative estimate, well into the thousands nationally. The electricity generated by a 1000 mwh coal-fired generator carries two price tags, one in dollars and one in lives. D. J. Rose and colleagues at MIT have calculated this second price tag. If we add up the number of coal miners killed in accidents, coal miners killed by "black lung" disease, and workers killed in transporting coal from the mine to the power plant, we see that each such plant kills at least 11 people a year. One can imagine how quickly the nuclear industry would be shut down if a single plant killed 11 people a year. Furthermore, if we add in the people killed by pollution from the plant, the exact number of which is a matter of controversy, we see that the price tag will list between 20 and 100 more human lives. This, it must be remembered, is the cost per year of *one* large coal-fired plant: between 31 and 111 lives a year. These deaths, it also must be remembered, are of actual people who die every year in order that coal-fired plants may be operated. In contrast, when we calculate all the deaths caused by a 1000 mwh light-water reactor—including all those killed by the fuel cycle, by the operation of the reactor, and by waste disposal, we arrive at a total of one-half a death a year. This half-death, by the way, is still largely hypothetical, since it includes amortized figures for a number of accidents that have not yet happened. While a few uranium miners are killed each year, *no one* has ever been killed by a commercial power reactor.

The death ratio between the two systems of power generation is thus seen to be between 60 and 225 to 1, favor nuclear. It is not surprising, given such figures, that nuclear critics rarely dwell on the dangers of coal. Nader and Abbotts engage in a particularly neat bit of footwork, in which an attempt to conceal the truth is paraded as an attempt at candor:

> It should be pointed out that, compared to workers in other energy industries, particularly those in the coal fuel cycle, the numbers of workers injured by the atomic industry are smaller. But it should also be recognized that nuclear power produces much less of the nation's energy than coal power. Moreover, be-

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cause the occupational dangers of nuclear power include cancers which will not become evident for several years, the full toll of the atomic industry can only be estimated.

This sleazy evasion suggests that the numbers of workers killed in the coal cycle are approximately in proportion to the amount of energy produced from coal, and that the occupational hazards of coal mining are limited to those killed in accidents. The facts are quite otherwise, and the fact that Ralph Nader could put his name to this scandalous paragraph suggests that his admirers overrate either his intelligence or his integrity.

It is one of life's little ironies that coal contains small amounts of radioactive elements, mostly radium and thorium, and that the typical coal-fired plant has a level of radioactive emission *greater* than that allowed for a nuclear plant. If the NRC had responsibility for regulating our coal-fired plants, they would have to be shut down.

The anti-nuclear lobby implies that waste disposal is a problem uniquely of nuclear power. The fact is that coal-fired plants solve part of this problem by disposing of their wastes into the air and thence into our lungs, and the rest by dumping. The amount disposed of into the atmosphere comes to some thirty pounds a year for each American. The solid wastes carted away to the dump from coal-fired plants total tens of millions of tons a year: some 36,500 truckloads a year for a 1000 megawatt plant. These contain not only such non-radioactive poisons as mercury, selenium, vanadium, and benzopyrene, but radioactive materials such as uranium and thorium in amounts that would be impermissible for emission from a nuclear plant.

It has been misleadingly suggested that the airborne disposal of coal wastes can be prevented in a benign fashion by the use of "scrubbers," expensive and unreliable devices that remove pollutants from smokestack effluents and trap them in millions of tons of sludge, itself a major form of pollution. This is the sort of "solved" waste-disposal problem that the anti-nuclear lobby wishes to saddle us with.

A massive commitment to coal would raise yet another problem, the possibility that a substantial increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide would lead to a long-term warming of the earth—the so-called "greenhouse effect." A recent report by a blue-ribbon panel of the National Academy of Scientists under the chairmanship of Roger Revelle estimates that the worldwide temperature might, within two hundred years, be raised as much as 11 degrees by this effect. The possible results for agriculture and for marine life thoroughly justify the panel's conclusion that the consequences of increased coal use would be "highly adverse." There is a pathetic irony in the sight of self-proclaimed "environmentalists" proposing to tamper with the earth's climate in this fashion.

COMPARED to coal, almost any technology looks safe, including oil. But even if political and other considerations made oil a reasonable source for generating power, it would pose terrible dangers. High-sulfur oil is environmentally far from benign, and when stored in large tanks, all oil poses a very serious hazard. The Bayonne fire of 1973, in which tankers and shore tanks caught fire, produced clouds of smoke that, had the wind carried them over Manhattan, and had there been an inversion, would have made the London "killer smog" of 1952, with its nearly 4,000 deaths, seem tame. The same can be said for the Brooklyn fire of 1976.

While natural gas produces minimal pollution, its potential for explosion is very considerable, and has killed people in the hundreds. There is considerable evidence that we are learning to handle natural gas safely, but had uranium built up a record similar to that of natural gas, we would never have gotten the chance to learn how to live with it.

Even hydropower, which is environmentally pretty benign as long as everything goes right, has great potential for catastrophic accident. The Vaiont disaster in 1963 killed 2,000 people, and a University of California study has identified a number of dams the failure of which would cause tens of thousands of deaths. One of these is estimated to have a potential of 260,000 deaths. This is in fact a larger death toll than anyone has ever suggested might result from a nuclear reactor accident, and its probability is substantially greater than the most serious nuclear accidents.

Sometimes nuclear critics, conceding that existing non-nuclear sources of energy are unsatisfactory, propose certain innovative technologies. Although all of these are safer than coal, and some even rival nuclear power in this respect, all have the disadvantage of being unworkable.

Solar and wind power are the most commonly promoted of these. Both have a place in a rational energy plan, but neither can fulfill the claims made for it by less critical supporters.*

Solar power is most useful for heating hot water and, in the proper climates, providing heat for houses. At present this use of solar power is so expensive as to be competitive only with electric heat. When it comes to providing electricity itself, cautious optimism suggests that solar power may one day be an option for individual homes—exploiting the one great advantage of the sun as an energy provider, that it is delivered to the doorstep—but the technology for such individual systems is now prohibitively expensive.

Solar power is less promising as a means of central generation. Solar energy for this purpose can be captured in two ways: by mirror systems that boil water to spin conventional turbogenerators, and by photovoltaic cells that produce electricity directly. Both types are at present too expensive to

* The same can be said, *mutatis mutandis*, for even more exotic forms such as geothermal power and wave power.

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contemplate. Additionally, the photo-voltaic system requires very large land areas. With luck, a 1000-megawatt plant (comparable to a large nuclear installation in capacity) would occupy 50 square miles.

Although wind power has real promise for very small demands at exotic locations, such as mountain-top weather stations, it too has been overtouted by nuclear critics. ERDA is sponsoring the construction of a very large wind-rotor that will produce all of 1.5 megawatts and cost $7 million. Producing as much electricity as a conventional nuclear plant would require 666 150-foot high towers. costing nearly $5 billion and completely dependent upon the weather. Only fantasists imagine such a technology as a significant source of energy.

The most promising source of energy under development is the fusion process. In fusion, the energy release occurs when two light atoms are fused together to make one. Because the fusion requires an immense amount of energy simply to maintain itself, any defect in a fusion reactor shuts it down; moreover, the basic fuel is almost limitlessly available in seawater. The disadvantage is that we do not yet know how to make the process work. Researchers now work with microscopic reactors that have only recently begun to generate more energy than is needed to sustain them. It is clear that commercial use of the fusion process at best is very distant, and there are those who doubt that it will ever pan out.

The fact is that for the foreseeable future our choice is between nuclear fission and coal. All our choices should be so easy.

IV

THE anti-nuclear movement has mounted campaigns to abolish nuclear power in seven states, and has failed in each case. Probably because polls indicate that the majority of Americans favor the development of nuclear power, none of the referenda was candidly drawn or promoted as a ban on it. Rather, each was drawn and promoted as a nuclear-safeguards proposal which would make nuclear energy safer rather than nonexistent. And each was loaded with standards which no nuclear reactor, present or projected, could ever hope to meet. The effect of these referenda would have been to stop the development of nuclear power in six of the states and to close the industry down entirely in a seventh.

One provision in the California referendum hypocritically required that all reactor-safety systems, including the emergency core-cooling system, undergo tests on an operating reactor. That is, it would have been necessary to initiate a loss-of-coolant accident in an operating reactor, an accident which the proponents of the referendum tell us is too dangerous ever to risk. Another section of the California referendum (substantially duplicated in the other states) required that the legislature certify that no radiation from waste escape with harmful effect into the atmosphere or the land. No coal-fired facility could meet an analogous requirement that no sulfur dioxide escape into the atmosphere. Indeed, no coal plant could meet a requirement forbidding it to emit radiation.

In the seven states, 20 per cent of the population of the country had a chance to vote on nuclear power. But in discussing the rejections of these referenda, Nader and Abbotts treat them as victories rather than as defeats, and adopt the cynical explanation that the opponents outspent the proponents. That is, the people really are too dumb to be trusted with such decisions.

These referenda have in the long run probably done actual harm to the cause of nuclear safety. An intelligent California referendum need have done little more than propose some new teeth for present federal regulations, such as fines so great for noncompliance with safety regulations that utilities would find compliance cheaper than defiance. There is of course no excuse for $10,000 fines for noncompliances that save $200,000. As it stands, such referenda have been given a bad name as disguised moratoria, and it is likely that their failure will make development of genuine safeguards legislation and referenda more difficult. It is the old story of the mindless extreme destroying the sensible middle.

Far from being cast down by its failures in these referenda, the anti-nuclear movement appears to be metastasizing. The spring of 1977 saw the sudden development of a new direction to the nuclear debate, the birth of a movement dedicated to stopping nuclear power through the tactics of civil disobedience.

By April 1977, the proposed nuclear plant at Seabrook, New Hampshire was already in trouble as the result of environmentalist suits and Environmental Protection Agency rulings on its cooling system, which was alleged to be harmful to clams;* on April 30, it became the target of a group of activists under the name of the Clamshell Alliance. Several thousand of these occupied the construction site, and when about 1,400 refused to move along, they were arrested for trespass. These the State of New Hampshire foolishly refused to release before trial on their own recognizance, but held them at various locations where before they were finally released there assuredly occurred much effective organization of the anti-nuclear movement.

The Boston "alternative" press reported on the incident with immense relish, announcing that the

* The EPA has recently reversed its regional administrator and approved the cooling system, a decision that has been appealed by the Friends of the Clam. In a related action, some of them went to the site and deposited thereon a quantity of dead fish and clams, who no doubt were glad to die that others might live. It was a scene anticipated a century ago by Lewis Carroll: "I like the Walrus best," said Alice, "because he was a *little* sorry for the poor oysters." "He ate more than the Carpenter, though," said Tweedledee.

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activism of the 60's had returned and that nuclear energy was going to become a domestic Vietnam. It could hardly have been happier news had the United States gotten involved in a new war in Southeast Asia.

The infant direct-action movement is patently and passionately anti-democratic. The construction of the Seabrook reactor is already regulated by laws passed by democratically elected legislatures and signed into law by democratically elected executives. These laws have been administered by constitutionally appointed officials and judges. The whole process has been a model of democracy and reflects the fact that a majority of Americans favor the development of nuclear power. But with the Clamshell Alliance and its like, the bottom line is that democracy has come up with the wrong answer, and so much the worse for democracy. The issue must therefore be decided not through democracy but through the physical actions of an elitist and highly organized minority that takes over for the degenerate and plutocratic state. Sam Lovejoy, the leading spirit of the alliance, has been quoted as putting it neatly: "No law ever closed down a nuke." What Lovejoy wants, he must have, whatever the law says. The legal arm of the movement, however, is nearly as peremptory; its flavor is admirably conveyed in a quotation attributed to an "environmentalist" lawyer: "It's about time we put the Seabrook reactor out of its misery."

Judged in the light of the *Zeitgeist,* nuclear power is the perfect demon. Kick it and you kick large corporations, the government, and technology, all with one blow of the foot. Since almost no one yet understands that his welfare depends on nuclear power—even though the welfare of many already does—moral indignation against it comes unusually cheap. The movement is also rather callous, as evidenced by its calm willingness to sacrifice the lives of coal miners—that is, the actual lives of the actual coal miners who are killed over the decades in their thousands—to prevent the hypothetical deaths of hypothetical people from nuclear power. Endangered individuals, especially if they are mere humans, appear to be much less worthy of protection than endangered species. The Seabrook reactor may fall victim to the interests of the clam, and the Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric project in Maine has been stymied to save a few specimens of an otherwise extinct plant called the furbish lousewort, which appears to be, not to put too fine a point on it, a noxious weed having nothing to recommend it but its name.

THE anti-nuclear movement combines a number of strands that have come to the fore in the last decade or so. One of these is the Manicheanism that can only see technological development as a choice between savage despoiling of the earth and apocalyptic risk on the one hand and a concern for "the environment" that puts clams before people on the other. Because we are in the early stages of the environmentalism fueled by this Manicheanism, none of those now calling the dance has to pay the piper, and indeed many may be able to escape altogether, leaving the problems they have created to their descendants.

Another is a kind of fashionable semi-Luddite fear of the unknown that fixes on certain new examples of industrial society as horrid and to be dispensed with while silently embracing all the others. This is entirely consistent with the history of Luddism, which has been by and large a conservative movement that seeks fresh targets when familiarity has put to rest its fear of the new and unknown over old ones.

Uneasiness with affluence has also bred a similarly selective asceticism that has become a commonplace perhaps best exemplified in communards who take their stereo sets—and hence a considerable proportion of modern technology—into the hills with them. This makes it easy for well-heeled suburbanites to preach a more restrained use of energy when all it means to them is giving up their electric can-openers. Such people in effect tell the billions in the undeveloped world who have only begun to sight liberation by the industrial revolution that they must give up cake.

Critics of nuclear power generally set great store by conservation as a means of reducing demand and thereby the need for new nuclear capacity. The first problem with this position is that it is not in any event desirable to generate all our power with fossil fuels. That is, over the long run, nuclear power is needed not only to add to the present capacity, but to replace it. The second problem is that all too often among the critics of the atom "conservation" is a euphemism for "de-development."

There is no way to argue against genuine conservation. Waste—that is, the *unnecessary* expenditure of anything—must be one of the most indefensible of all categories, and there clearly are a number of ways in which the United States could engage in genuine conservation, i.e., the elimination of true waste. But much of the waste alleged by the anti-nuclear lobby is in fact simply expenditure on ends they do not approve (like air-conditioning).

One chestnut beloved by the lobby is that the Swiss and the Swedes maintain our standard of living but use only half as much energy as we do. *Ergo,* half our consumption must be waste. The short answer to this is that in common with the rest of the industrialized world, the United States has an extremely low energy consumption for its GNP, and our use in fact lies on the curve of lowest consumption. A somewhat longer answer has been given by Beckmann, who points out that we could get by with less energy if we had no energy-intensive industry and instead made watches and wrote insurance, imported most of our food, and arranged to acquire a new topography that would allow us to generate most of our electricity with

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falling water. Like so so much of the economics of the critics, the thought of Scandinavianization turns out to be a romantic fantasy.

The critics of nuclear power have concentrated on alleging that it is unsafe. Although no large-scale energy conversion can ever be totally safe, we have seen that on the critics' own criterion, nuclear power is to be preferred to the available alternatives.

But safety is not the only grounds for preferring nuclear energy to other forms. One reason is of course political. A nuclear economy based on breeder reactors, whether on the plutonium or thorium cycle, would make the United States forever safe from energy blackmail. Thorium is one of the most abundant elements in nature, and the existing U-238 supply already mined would feed an all-breeder economy for several hundred years.

Furthermore, *pace* the anti-nuclear lobby, nuclear power is especially desirable if we mean to fulfill our obligations to our descendants. That movement is informed with a very tender concern for generations yet unborn, and regularly asserts that our obligation to these generations prohibits us from leaving them with an insoluble waste-disposal problem. This is true but irrelevant: as we have already seen, we are not leaving them any such problem. But we are leaving them a negative legacy much more serious. For we are consuming vast amounts of petrochemical feedstocks—coal, oil, and gas—as fuel. It happens that it has been our good fortune to find a substitute for these materials used as fuel. For their use in the fabrication of much of our world, we have developed no replacement, and if we go on using coal, oil, and gas as fuel we shall insure that at some point in the future our descendants will run out of petrochemicals. Had we any real sense of responsibility in these matters, we would be working to make the term "fossil fuel" seem ludicrous. Our present behavior will very probably force our descendants to return to the industrial economy of the early 19th century. Our waste of their heritage is the more scandalous because it is unnecessary.

RECENTLY a funny thing happened at the National Council of Churches, a division of which has declared plutonium morally dubious and called for a moratorium on its use. Defenders of this bizarre intrusion of theology into science, which awoke echoes of Galileo's encounter with the Inquisition, explained that because the scientific community was split down the middle on plutonium, the theological community ought to have a deciding vote. Plutonium, they said, was not a technical or scientific issue, but a moral one.

It is of course always very much easier to argue for or against anything in the soft morasses of "moral issues," and one can hardly blame the plutonophobes for trying to get the discussion into this marsh. The problem is that the alleged split within the scientific community finds, almost without exception, all those with the relevant expertness—the specialists in nuclear physics, health physics, and radiation medicine—for, and scientists from almost every field that does not bear on the problem, against. This is as true for nuclear energy in general as for the carefully controlled use of plutonium.

The real importance of the National Council's nuclear *ukase,* however, is to recall that some years back it had actually endorsed nuclear energy as a gift from God. And so it seemed then, and so it would still seem had our society not long since learned to believe that such gifts must be unambiguously delightful, harmless, and without serious inconvenience or challenge.

The fact is that historically such gifts take considerable courage on the part of mankind if they are to be grasped and used for benefit. We remember with amusement those who opposed the railroad because it would stop the cows from giving milk and because the human constitution could not endure speeds as great as thirty miles an hour. Our amusement will be no more than condescension, however, if we think that we are safe from similar attacks of ignorant terror. If we are lucky, our descendants will be no more than amused by the nuclear Luddism of our time.

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Looting and Liberal Racism

Midge Decter

On July 13, 1977, at 9:30 in the evening, New York City went suddenly and totally dark. The electric power had failed throughout the entire city. Within minutes several neighborhoods in the boroughs of Manhattan, the Bronx, and Brooklyn were aswarm with gangs of young men and little boys, lead pipes and gasoline in hand, on a rampage of looting and arson. Later, no doubt when the mayhem had become widespread and irresistible, a certain number of women and girls joined in. Small stores, restaurants, and supermarkets were broken into, their stocks cleaned out and fixtures smashed. In one neighborhood, the Bushwick section of Brooklyn, the fire department was literally unable to keep pace with the nightlong, and then daylong, setting of new fires.

It took twenty-four hours to achieve the full restoration of electricity. Meanwhile, havoc continued. In some areas the combination of daylight and continuous police surveillance brought a kind of spent, dazed quiet. In others—East Harlem, for instance, and the now infamous Bushwick—the pillage continued through much of the following day, interrupted only by the repeated appearance of the police, who arrived to carry off another and yet another wagonload of looters, and by occasional interviews granted to the press.

In any case, by the time the lights were all back on and the trains and elevators running, well over two thousand of New York's small businesses had been smashed, at a loss estimated at anywhere from $165 million to $1 billion, depending on how one did the computation. (Since most of the looted stores, because of their location, could not in the first place be adequately insured, the real figure will never be arrived at.) Nearly four thousand people had been taken into custody for looting, thus swamping the city's jails and courts. Untold numbers of participants in the night's activities had been treated in hospital emergency rooms, some of these operating without power, for knife and glass wounds. More than four hundred policemen and firemen had been injured, several of them seriously.

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So much is history. What cannot, of course, be captured in a telling of the facts and numbers, nor even in the more vivid newsphotos and TV news clips of the ongoing destruction, is the actual quality of the city's experience on that long, dark night. Much discussion has subsequently taken place, particularly on the editorial and Op-Ed pages of the New York *Times,* about whether or not their fellow citizens were justified in using the word "animals" to characterize the looters. But the term in any case seems inappropriate; for anyone watching them at work, surging out of the shadows in a horde and scurrying back into the cover of darkness as the police cars came by, the imagery suggested is one taken from insect life—from urban insect life—rather than from the jungle or forest. Certainly the feeling left in the city by the night of July 14 was not so much of having been trampled as of having been given a sudden glimpse into the foundations of one's house and seen, with horror, that it was utterly infested and rotting away. No one will be at ease in the edifice again for a long time, if ever.

Now, people living in so famously troubled a city as New York are perhaps surprising candidates for a fresh experience of social trauma such as I have just described. After all, there have been arson and looting before, at least in some of the city's worst black ghettos. The South Bronx, for instance, having in the last few years become an arsonist's heaven, is by now a surrealist moonscape. And while during the riots that erupted in the aftermath of Martin Luther King's assassination the city suppressed the truth of what was happening so that its then mayor, John Lindsay, might be congratulated for the success of his enlightened policy, anyone going through Harlem in the weeks after could clearly see all the detritus of a large-scale social explosion. Nor was the blackout itself a new experience. There had also been a total citywide (indeed region-wide) power failure once before, in 1965, during which New Yorkers had had ample opportunity to discover that the health and safety and general welfare of congested urban communities can nowadays hang by a single wire. And finally, as all the world knows, and some part of the world even views with a certain amount of malicious satisfaction, New York is currently engaged in a battle against fiscal, and with

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it possibly economic and social, ruin. It would seem that people might have expected nothing less of a power failure on a hot July night than what did in fact take place.

The problem was that after several years of being caught up in the fashion of pronouncing life in New York to be intolerable—a fashion made up in about equal parts of genuine weariness with street-corner violence, the chic gaspings and coughings of environmentalism, and a general political bad mood, faintly radical in origin—the city's inhabitants were beginning to feel a bit better, if not about their lot in life, then at least about themselves. This turn in mood, discernible in the language of the local press and the tone of public and private conversation more than in any measurable change in actual political and social conduct, was almost directly attributable to the fiscal crisis. If the prospect of being hanged concentrates the mind wonderfully, as Dr. Johnson so usefully and quotably said, then the prospect of going bankrupt seemed to concentrate the affection of New Yorkers and help them to regain their sense of urban pride. Moreover, the discovery of how widespread was the hostility to New York, and with what equanimity other Americans were prepared to view its downfall, stirred a new spirit of loyalty: one of the most commonly enunciated sentiments about the crisis came to be that the city was in fiscal trouble because it was better than other places, more generous and compassionate with its citizenry, more alive to the beauties of racial, cultural, and class heterogeneity.

But there was another, more precise and particular, reason for the sense of trauma as well. The previous blackout, though more than a decade past, was still rather vivid in the memory of those old enough to have been around as a moment of neighborliness and civic cooperation and that special kind of gaiety that these produce in times of crisis. This time when the lights went out, people were able to recognize immediately the possible magnitude of the problem and at the same time to feel assured on the basis of experience that there was no cause for panic.

For a moment or two, that is. As things turned out, we know, civic cooperation was left largely to policemen and firemen who worked around the clock with little rest and to private citizens who stood with baseball bats and lead pipes of their own, prepared to fend off any advancing marauders and defend the ground for friends and neighbors. Thus, beyond the dangerous disruptions attendant on the withdrawal of electricity from a community of nearly eight million people living in fewer than three hundred square miles, beyond even the immeasurable, irrecoverable physical and economic damage done both to individuals and to New York as a whole, there was additional shock—perhaps the greatest shock of all—in the force with which the city had been caught spiritually off guard.

WHATEVER the outraged bewilderment of most ordinary New Yorkers in the face of twisted iron, broken glass, empty stores, and burnt-out buildings, however, it can at least be said that they were not left for very long with any unappeased hunger for an explanation. Even before the last fire engine had returned to its berth and the first looter taken from his temporary jail cell for arraignment, a group of important spokesmen for the conventional wisdom of what is nowadays called liberalism had reached a consensus on the meaning of the looting and were offering it confidently to the world.

The events of the night of July 13, according to this consensus, though deplorable, were a much-needed reminder of the way American society had failed. In the relative racial quiet of the past few years, many of us had been lulled into a false sense of security about the condition of the poor and black young, out of a wish to be shut of disquieting feelings of obligation to them and at the invitation of certain politicians to indulge that wish. But now we were being forced once more to confront our failure.

This failure consisted essentially of two things, one material, one, as it were, attitudinal. On the material side, there was the intolerably high rate of unemployment among minority-group youth, said to be 40 to 50 per cent in the worst of the slum ghettos. Some liberal accounts of this unemployment have held it to be the result of federal policy, instituted by Nixon and Ford, to control inflation through creating vast armies of the jobless. Others have declared it not so much the result of a particular policy as the fruit of a political and economic order not yet awake to the realization that its very survival will sooner or later depend on its willingness to effect a massive redistribution of the wealth. In either case, whether because its leaders have been retrograde or because its very structure is unsound, the system had been leaving minority youths to rot and crumble on the streetcorners of rotting and crumbling slums. "To walk the sidewalks in Harlem," said Clayton Riley, teacher of African studies at Cornell University, in an essay which appeared on the Op-Ed page of the New York *Times* on July 17, "is to *feel* —beyond seeing or hearing it—the grip of desperation that has too many strong, healthy people sitting around for months at a time, waiting for jobs that will never materialize, looking for chances America now admits it cannot provide."

Being jobless, then, without work and without hope of work, is one of the things that turns young men, at the slightest provocation, into "animals." But if unemployment provides the hard material ground for black desperation, the psychic counterpoint to that ground is an even more desperation-making indifference. Affluent white society, announced the liberal spokesmen, situated at a safe and comfortable distance from the truth about places like Harlem, had beguiled itself with

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the sight of a few successful blacks into believing that there was no longer a racial crisis in America. In the words of a New York *Times* editorial (also published on July 17): "Places called Bushwick, Brownsville, East Harlem, and Williamsburg are miles beyond the ken of the thriving and thrusting Americans who make policy and mold opinions. The people who live in such places have always been beyond the vision of most Americans, but since the upheavals of the 60's, they have become even less visible."

Our callous indifference to ghetto conditions is both private—the luxury of those whom a benign fate had permitted to move to, or be born into, greener suburban pastures—and political: the urban riots in the late 60's should have given us ample warning that something must be done, and done quickly, to overcome poverty, but we did not, said the *Times* in yet another editorial, "spend enough of our ingenuity and our affluence to solve the problems the riots of the 60's made evident. . . ."

Or, in the somewhat more sonorous recital of Clayton Riley: "We are building sports complexes and increasing our manufacture of luxury automobiles while failing to provide substance to the dreams of nothing more than shelter, clothes, food, and some occasional fun." Indeed, no less a spokesman for the enlightened consensus than the President of the United States himself saw the looting as a message that more programs were needed in the areas of housing, health, education, and jobs for urban areas that had, as he put it, been "neglected too long."

In other words, proclaimed the liberal consensus, the looting was an expression of the rage and desperation of minority youth at being the hopeless members of a hopeless community. Permit this rage and desperation to ferment unseen for long enough, as we have done, turn on the summer heat, turn off all the lights . . . and hark what bloody and sulphurous discord follows.

THE first thing that strikes one about this explanation for what happened on the night of July 13—aside from the speed and the easy, one might almost say cheerful, assurance with which it was brought forth out of a moment of unforeseen chaos—is its complete familiarity. For well over a decade now there has been almost no form of urban unpleasantness, from pursesnatching to rioting, which has not instantly been imputed by those who have elected to speak in the name of liberalism to the inescapability of black poverty and the indifference of white society to it. Moreover, for those who offer it, the explanation seems to apply equally well to any given condition or policy and its exact opposite. To speak of white brutality at one point in time, for instance, was to refer to the whites' refusal to accept blacks as their full equals; at another point in time it meant a refusal to accord blacks a special status as a damaged and thus incapacitated community. The term brutality has sometimes been intended to mean that we degrade the poor by keeping them as objects of charity on welfare and sometimes that we degrade the poor by not making our charity more abundant. (These particular antipodes were even forced together within a single movement, presided over by two professors of social work, Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven, whose aim was to wreck the welfare system by recruiting an intolerable number of people to it—with what resulting cost New York City may never be able to reckon.) The unconcern of the white community for black need was at one point said to be evidenced by the absence of black elected officials, particularly in the big cities, and then when blacks began to be elected to major offices, was said to be evidenced by the willingness of the whites to allow black mayors and police chiefs to preside over decaying and troubled urban centers.

But most familiar, and on the other hand most curious, of all is the general assertion—made in the teeth of how many hundreds upon hundreds of government programs and hundreds upon hundreds of millions (or is it billions?) of dollars of public expenditure—that the problems of the urban poor have been neglected. Many things have been, and no doubt will long continue to be, in dispute in the discussion of the relative success or failure of this or that aspect of that aggregate enterprise known as the poverty program. What we do know is that there has been a massive, whether or not adequate, effort to improve the social and economic condition of the poor—particularly and by all means the black poor. And what we do know further is that there has been, whether or not as a result of this effort and however inadequate we judge it to be, a substantial improvement in the social and economic condition of the black population. There are those who would say that government intervention in behalf of the racial minorities, by creating certain economic and social problems, actually impeded rather than aided their progress. Be that as it may, the terms "neglect" or "indifference" when applied in this case can have only, and perhaps are intended only to have, a liturgical effect.

In fact, one of the arguments offered in that first rush of liberal explication of the looting was that the new-found success of some of its (presumably now departed) sons and daughters had left the old ghetto neighborhood in an even more desperate condition than before. "Although the civil-rights movement brought greatly improved opportunities for minorities through law and public policy"—wrote John Herbers, deputy chief of the New York *Times* Washington Bureau, in a piece which appeared under the headline "Urban Poor Worse Off Than Ever"—"and many blacks and Hispanics flourished in politics and private employment, the poor neighborhoods in the big

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urban centers continued to fester and decline" (July 24). The famous departure of the middle class from the central city, the process which was making the city an ever more stricken and abandoned social entity, had come very much to include the black middle class. Again, a source of genuine difficulty for the community left behind perhaps, but hardly one to be scored as a failure of American society. Those who got to move out might even be forgiven for reckoning it a *success* of American society.

But what then of the ones left behind, the "worse off than ever," the desperate unemployed young men? So far from being invisible, as the *Times* editorial quoted earlier suggested, possibly having in mind the 40's Harlem depicted by Ralph Ellison, they have long been at the very center of public preoccupation: whole professions have grown up around them. They have enjoyed as no other group the ministrations of society, no doubt only questionably welcome—in the form of special teachers, guidance counselors, attendance officers, social workers of every variety, family courts, therapists, particularly drug therapists, posing as athletic coaches, gang advisers, and on and on. Even the lack of jobs for them is at least in part attributable to a nothing if not high-intentioned government intervention in their behalf: that is, the imposition of a minimum wage for teenagers along with adults. This means that among their other problems as potential employees, including difficulty in receiving and accepting training, they have been made simply uneconomic to hire for the kind of marginal work they can do.

In New York City there has been a growing employment crisis in general, created not by the absence of good will but by the positive flight from the city of businesses unable to find a qualified and efficient labor force and yet constrained to pay high wages to an unreliable one. Labor-union opposition to the lifting of the minimum-wage requirements for adolescents would of course, and from labor's point of view justifiably, have been very strong. But so, one feels, would opposition from those very spokesmen for civic "compassion" who currently bid us to pay heed to the job needs of the enraged ghetto young, on the grounds that a malign and greedy business community was trying to exploit them. Just as it seems not to have occurred to Clayton Riley that the building of sports complexes and the manufacture of luxury automobiles are precisely the sorts of activity that create jobs and bring a bit of wealth to the working class, so many who are habitually quick and sure and virtuous in all their analyses of social problems often find it worthwhile to remain oblivious to any of the consequences of their views in the real world.

Many people have in the same way also found it worthwhile to remain unaware of just how knotty in the first place is the whole question of youth unemployment in the urban ghetto. To begin with, there is the problem of what actually constitutes unemployment and how percentages like 40 per cent and 50 per cent are arrived at. There is certainly no doubt—the simple evidence of one's senses in the course of a car ride through, say, Harlem or Bedford-Stuyvesant will suffice to confirm—that hordes of adolescent boys and post-adolescent young men hang out seemingly all day long on street corners, spending their time in a form of play which consists largely of offering menace to one another and to passers-by. That they are idle and as a consequence headed for trouble of one kind or another is obvious. That they mind being in this condition is less obvious. That they are all of them poor is less obvious still. And that they are unemployed, in the sense of having sought, and failed to find, a job, seems in many cases simply a laughable proposition.

In the early 60's, under the deceptively simple and never uninteresting tutelage of the late Paul Goodman, enlightened people had "discovered" such young men. Not that troubled city youth needed to be called to society's attention; on the contrary, they had for some time had a full measure of attention because of the special juvenile brand of street warfare they engaged in, "rumbling," which left several of their number bleeding to death virtually every Saturday night. But no one had known really what to make of, let alone what to do with, the street gang and its terrifying ethos. Then in what was to prove his classic work, *Growing Up Absurd,* Goodman had illuminated the problem. "It is hard to grow up," he wrote, "when there isn't enough man's work." And from this observation there developed a whole strategy not only for dealing with but for thinking about ghetto youth—call it the manpower strategy—and from this strategy in turn there developed a whole new profession—poverty worker. It would be difficult to arrive at an accurate estimate of how many dollars, public and private, have circulated both through and at the behest of this profession. With what results we have long since had ample opportunity to see.

But Goodman also said something more, and in a way even more consequential: "There is nearly full employment (with highly significant exceptions)," he went on (the book was published in 1960; as it happens, first in these pages), "but there get to be fewer jobs that are necessary or unquestionably useful; that require energy and draw on some of one's best capacities; and that can be done keeping one's honor and dignity." In this sentence is contained the skeleton of an idea—perhaps it should be called a bent of mind—that is with us still: this is the idea that jobs available to the poor, particularly the young poor, are almost by definition not real jobs. Frequently those who say that a decent society would be a society where so many hundreds of thousands would not

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need to be on welfare, for instance, respond to the evidence that many people find welfare preferable to gainful employment by countering that the only jobs society is offering them are "dead-end" jobs. "Dead-end" might mean, as in Goodman's schema, unmanly; or it might mean unpleasant, unrewarding, or unsatisfying; or it might mean without sufficient opportunity for advancement. Whichever particular meaning the term is given, something the liberal spokesmen have neglected to tell us is that when they warn us that society had better provide these young men with jobs, they mean society had better provide them with *good* jobs. If moving up into the American middle class is, as James Baldwin has so eloquently sought to convince his black brothers, a snare and a delusion, what is one to say about the prospect of moving up into the American working class? It would hardly, as many a big-city employer has learned, be worth getting out of bed in the morning for. And indeed a fact widely known but by common consent never alluded to—a truth, to borrow a phrase, that dare not speak its name—is that even now, in a period thought to be suffering from a cruelly and unnecessarily high rate of unemployment, there are all sorts of jobs that from one month or year to the next cannot find any takers.

Naturally a major consideration in talking about jobs, not necessarily always included in the characterization "dead-end" but nonetheless surely important to it, is money. For large numbers of those young men on street corners it does not pay to take a job. Not only because there is nothing much they are qualified to do; and not only because welfare payments are at least adequate to keep them housed and fed; and not only because they have increasingly been brought up in, and seem content to perpetuate, a system of being kept by women; but because so many of them have access, or the occasional promise of access, to a different kind of money—money sometimes dangerously, but always easily, come by.

Another famous book of the 60's, much praised but obviously insufficiently attended to, is Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land,* which provides an illuminating account of the actual days and nights of many a Harlem youth. The book tells a terrible story; between drugs and jails, hardly any of Brown's old gang survived. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that Brown and his friends would not have been caught dead holding down a regular job. In their case, the income of preference happened to be that derived from the rolling of drunks. But the list of lucrative street occupations for the alert and hard-working is long and various: for the well-connected, there is running numbers or running errands for those who do; there are the many different levels of participation in the trafficking of drugs; there is stealing; there is mugging; there is (or used to be) contriving to get paid to go to school; and finally there is selling the services of one, or if you are very shrewd and talented, of a whole stable, of your girl friends. This list of employments is not very pretty and has been intentionally somewhat narrowed for emphasis, but one pays those young men less than proper respect to imagine that President Carter can so easily afford the means to buy them away from their present life.

And if it is not true that they are to be seen day after day hanging about on stoops and parked cars because they are tired from having pounded the pavements in vain, it is even less true that the looting and arson were acts of desperation. Nothing at this moment seems more critical for the social and even political health of New York City than that we have done with at least some of the cant in which we have been threatening to drown ourselves.

It is cant to call the looters victims of racial oppression, and it is still worse cant to say that their condition is the result of our apathy. Immigrants from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, San Salvador, Haiti, and Puerto Rico—all of whom were prominently included among the looters—may have been the hapless victims of something, but not in the United States. They flock here and go to any lengths not to be sent home—hardly the behavior, no matter how hard a time they are going through, of victims. They are poor, to be sure, but like all immigrant groups they are *here* because they were even poorer before.

It is cant to say that the looting only took place in the city's worst slums. Manhattan's Upper West Side is hardly Eden, but no one lives there in unimaginable squalor, except perhaps for the community of the very old people and the insane—white more than black—who have been dumped in the neighborhood by children or welfare agencies or the enlightened new practice of shutting down the asylums and drugging their former inmates to the eyeballs so that they may wander up and down Broadway. And speaking from the point of view of social attitude, the Upper West Side may be the most naturally and unself-consciously integrated neighborhood in America.

It is cant to refer to the looters as animals, because on that fateful July night they were behaving in all-too-human a fashion. It is also cant to say, as the *New Yorker* did in a ludicrous "Talk of the Town" piece (August 8), that people's anger at the looting after it had occurred actually caused the looting (or in the *New Yorker*'s own words, "the attitude toward the riots created the riots").

But it is cant above all to say of the looters' conduct—as Herbert Gutman did in a truly disgraceful piece (which also appeared on the *Times* Op-Ed page, July 21), in which he compared them with a group of Jewish housewives in 1902 who organized what turned into a rowdy protest against the high cost of kosher meat and threw meat into the street to rot—that they were giving us "a pained message." Anyone who

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actually watched the looters at work, as those of us who live in looted neighborhoods were privileged to do first-hand and as millions of Americans did briefly on television, knows that they were doing no such thing as expressing rage or even blindly giving vent to some pent-up experience of torment: they were having the time of their lives. To see them, or better yet to listen to them through the darkness, shouting instructions to one another and roaring with their exertions, was to understand that they were people getting intoxicated on their dumb luck. Possibly that is why so many got caught—for falling into a state of drunken incaution and forgetting to take proper advantage of the dark. By the next day, of course, the looting was not so much drunken as obsessive, going on blindly in full daylight. Who among those listening to Group-W radio will ever forget, for the sake of any mere social theory, the voice of the young man in Bushwick being interviewed in front of a clothing store he had just ripped off saying distractedly and impatiently to the interviewer: "Hey, man, all right, I'll tell you. *It's the name of the game.* Aw Jesus, man, let me go now—I got to *go!*"

Nor will a month of Sundays' worth of sermons about poverty and alienation erase the image captured in the special report which appeared in the July 25 issue of *Newsweek:* a woman wandering through the second floor of a Brooklyn discount furniture store looking for end tables and complaining to the others who were busily carrying away furniture, "I just can't use a thing up here."

Many, in some neighborhoods possibly most, of the looted stores were owned by people only marginally less poor than the looters. Many, in some neighborhoods possibly most, of these stores were owned by blacks or Hispanics—people who had refused to heed James Baldwin's advice and had thrown in their lot with the American small-merchant class. The mobs who smashed their businesses, in some cases permanently, seemed to bear no personal grudge or resentment;* they were simply taking advantage of the double opportunity of the blackout and the courage that is found in numbers to steal. Clearly one of the psychic advantages of looting—once someone does his fellows the favor of commencing—is that it does not quite feel like stealing. In any case, whatever the psychic mechanism at work in the looting, its *aim* was theft. And the accompanying emotion was neither anger nor frustration but simple greed. Merely standing in front of one's premises with some sort of weapon in one's hand often sufficed to hold the looters at bay. They were after all not looking for trouble but for goods—and for the childlike high times of getting these goods, grown-up toys, for nothing. As for the arson, it, too, had a kind of macabre picnic quality: both a great and thrilling bonfire and a game of tag with the fire department.

TO BE SURE, the combination of greed and the special opportunity afforded by the blackout, potent as such a combination might be, is not by itself enough to explain that uncontrollable bout of pillage. Greed, being one of the seven deadly sins, may be assumed to be in some degree present in all human affairs. As, surely, is some degree of opportunity. Even so God-given an opportunity as a citywide power failure had been presented once before without being acted upon. If the looting was not an explosion of despair and rage, a cumulative response to joblessness and hopelessness and the feeling of being abandoned, how are we to account for it?

The answer is that all those young men went on their spree of looting because they had been given permission to do so. They had been given permission to do so by all the papers and magazines, movies and documentaries—all the outlets for the purveying of enlightened liberal attitude and progressive liberal policy—which had for years and years been proclaiming that race and poverty were sufficient excuses for lawlessness. They had been given permission to do so by all the politicians and government officials who had for years and years through their policies been expressing their belief that there was no other way to "tame" ghetto youth except through bribery and no other way to move them ahead in life except by special arrangement. And they had been given permission to do so by all the self-appointed foundation- or government-funded militant spokesmen for the interests of the black and Hispanic communities whose threats of "long hot summers" had been the key to their exercise of power with the political establishment. The previous blackout, it is important to remember, had taken place before all these various embodiments of liberal enlightenment on race had offered their blessings to the riots in Watts and Detroit or heaped encomiums on the likes of Huey Newton and H. Rap Brown.

"Pained messages" are being transmitted and received, all right, but in exactly the opposite direction from the one suggested by Herbert Gutman. Young blacks are getting the message from the liberal culture, more subtly but just as surely as from any old-time Southern sheriff, that they are, inherently and by virtue of their race, inferior. There are virtually no crimes they can commit that someone with great influence does not rush in to excuse on the grounds that we had no right to expect anything else. Moreover, there is virtually no traditional form of manliness—fathering one's children, defending one's women—that is not considered a cruel and bigoted demand to make on them, given the difficulties it would bring them. They must not be judged by the standards that apply to everyone else in school or in applying

* On my own block for instance—on upper Broadway in Manhattan—several elegant small shops, purveying goods of no particular interest to the looters, were left untouched in the midst of surrounding bedlam.

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for or performing jobs; because they cannot succeed, it is heartless to subject them to the possibility of failure. Sooner or later, if only for its own survival, society will simply have to become wise enough and kind enough, and spend enough money, to be able to maintain them, and their unfathered children and unhusbanded wives, in comfort and dignity. The message they are given, in short, is that they are not fully enough human to be held morally responsible for their own behavior. They are children, as the Southerners used to say, or ironically, they are, in the terminology the New York *Times* editorialist so much objected to but so inevitably himself implied, "animals."

This is the message that has for some time now, at least since the late 60's, been consistently transmitted by the "best" people, and certainly widely received by their intended interlocutors. It is, to be blunt about it, the message of liberal racism.

But the problem does not rest there. For no matter how passionately the liberals argue against it, everyone at bottom holds himself morally responsible for what he does. Being told over and over again in a hundred different ways, as these ghetto youths are, that they are blameless victims does not convince them but only saps their ever-dwindling store of self-respect. Anyone who knows them or who has ever truly looked at them at their sidewalk stations can see, year by year, from little-boyhood to young manhood, the dying away of self-esteem: the special swaggering walk so full of uncertainty, the nearly insane scrutiny of every word, gesture, look, tone of voice directed to them for evidence of insult. They are people who have come dangerously to share in their would-be sympathizers' contempt for them.

It is possible for some of these young men to resist the idea that they are entitled to the special status of irresponsibles. Though one would not necessarily know it from reading the liberal press, many, many have resisted it, are resisting it, and will do so in the future (the "invisible" blacks, of course, are the millions of blacks, particularly young men, who lead ordinary lives). But it is an unfair burden—here is where the true cruelty and injustice lies—for a boy to have to bring himself to moral maturity, as well as for the parents who are trying to help him do so, without any support or confirmation from the society around him for the moral weight of his actions.

As it is, so far from being supported or confirmed, he is constantly being disconfirmed. He is disconfirmed, for instance, in a school system whose policy is that he must be passed from grade to grade regardless of whether he can read or write; by a board of education whose policy is that he is not worth the risk his teacher or principal must face in trying to discipline him; or by a juvenile-justice system which defines as "delinquency" deeds he knows in his heart of hearts to be serious crimes. However hurtful and humiliating it must have been for a grown black man to suffer being called "boy," surely nothing can suck the marrow from the bones faster or more thoroughly than calling a bad boy blameless.

THUS THE young men who went rampaging on that hot July night were neither innocents nor savages; they were people in the grip of the pathology that arises from moral chaos. They were doing something they knew to be wrong but had been given a license for, and had not been able to find the inner resources to overcome their temptation. A subsequent New York *Times* editorial (July 28) written in response to a flood of mail from readers condemning the looters (and evidently also the paper for its initial soft response to them) reiterates the proposition that poverty and race were the salient factors in the looting: "Denounce them, jail them, hate them. Still the question lingers. . . . They appeared only in the poorest sections of town and drew recruits only from the poorest population groups, albeit only a tiny fraction of them. The question is why these and only these? Why, bluntly, no white looters in white neighborhoods?" The real answer to this question, I am afraid, is not to be found in the economy, nor even in the hot, nervous streets of summertime New York. It is to be found in a decade's worth of the spread of this very liberal and very racist idea: that being black is a condition for special moral allowance.

In the course of the radio coverage of July 14, two little black boys, sounding about twelve years old, were interviewed and announced that they had taken no part in the looting going on all around them. They seemed a bit sheepish. When asked by the interviewer, "Why not?" one of them said, "I was scared of the cops," and the other one said, "Because my mama would have killed me." A brave and lucky woman, that mama—no thanks to the culture intent on whispering sweet *nada* into her little boy's ear.

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Quebec's Jews: Caught in the Middle

Ruth R. Wisse and Irwin Cotler

Until very recently, the prevailing ethnic tension in Canada's province of Quebec—between the French-speaking Roman Catholic majority and the strong minority of English Protestants—stimulated the development of a large, cohesive Jewish community, perhaps the most vigorous in North America. Quebec's climate of candid ethnicity had made Montreal, where most immigrants to Canada once settled, an increasingly polyglot, cosmopolitan center, hospitable to groups (like the Jews) that could readily maintain their distinctiveness. But with the rise of a separatist nationalistic movement, culminating in the election last November of the *Parti Québecois,* the atmosphere has rapidly changed. For the first time in the history of Canada, a provincial government has been elected that is committed to taking Quebec out of the confederation. Whether or not it is ultimately successful, the French Canadian bid for separate statehood has already resulted in proposed legislation and policies of dubious constitutionality, if not actual threat to individual civil liberties. Ever a barometer of change, the Jewish community has entered upon a state of almost continuous caucus that reflects uncertainty about the present and anxiety about the future.

From the point of view of French Canadian nationalists, the potential erosion of minorities in Quebec is a negligible consideration in the struggle for sovereignty. Themselves a minority of 6 million in a country of 23 million (and on a continent where some 225 million speak English as a native tongue), the French Canadians feel they must effectively protect themselves from cultural extinction. The French Canadian birth rate in Quebec, once so high it was dubbed "the revenge of the cradles," has now dropped to become the lowest in Canada. Immigrants to the province, while maintaining solidarity with their own ethnic origins, drifted into the English-language stream, swelling the proportion of "Anglophones" in the overall population. Most disturbing, from the nationalist perspective, was the steady flow of upwardly mobile French Canadians into the English school system and social milieu where opportunities for personal advancement have been more plentiful and attractive. The penetration into Canada of American media, and the increasing influence of English in cultural as well as economic affairs, seemed to insure a dilution of ethnic consciousness and a diminution of the French language base.

Like all nationalist movements, the separatists of Quebec are fired not merely by concerns for their future, but by grievances of the past. As the descendants of the "conquered" in the battle between the British and the French for control of this part of the New World, the French Canadians seem to have inherited, as part of their historical baggage, a sense of collective victimization. Although they form some 80 per cent of Quebec's population, French Canadians point out that they have not achieved economic power or influence in any relation to their numbers. The laissez-faire policy of Quebec politicians in the mid-century period of rapid industrialization and expansion brought increased prosperity to the province, but it also guaranteed the linguistic domination of English, the language of most capital and management. Separatists insist that the historical wrong can only be righted, the economic and social inequities balanced, and the cultural threat dissipated, in an independent Quebec. The French Canadian therefore advocates affirmative action, but of a kind that would culminate not in integration but in a separate but equal constitutional status.

With a sense of eerie familiarity, Quebec's community of 115,000 Jews finds itself beset by a *crise de conscience*: on the one hand, Jews understand, even sympathize with, the aspirations for self-renewal on the part of French Canadians. At the same time, Jews fear the inevitable fallout of these nationalist impulses and oppose their repressive dimensions. They also wonder at what point their own particularism, so acceptable in what was once an atmosphere of ethnic pluralism, will stick in the craw of a nationalist bid for domination. Where the individual Jew weighs the spiritual and material costs on the personal level, for the Jewish community as a whole the matter is more complex: does the uniqueness of the Montreal Jewish community justify a special effort at adaptation to the new situation, in order to protect and nurture the community's many institutions and cultural

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achievements? Or is the Montreal experience now being revealed as just another piece of evidence corroborating the old Zionist contention that the Diaspora can never provide a wholly comfortable home for Jews?

THE present tensions have impressed upon Montreal Jewry an awareness of its previous independence, and of the ripe promise that may now remain forever unrealized. The virtues of Jewish communal and cultural life in the city are only now being appreciated and understood. In themselves, the Jewish health and welfare agencies, the many social and cultural organizations, may not set Montreal apart from American cities with comparable Jewish populations. But the centripetal force of communal activity is stronger there than elsewhere, and for most Montreal Jews the other "solitudes"—French and English—seem not only uninviting but uncompelling when compared to the dynamic activity within the Jewish community itself.

Jewish Montreal is still largely an immigrant community. While some local Jews can trace back their Quebec ancestry seven generations, the majority have come since 1920, and a third of the community since World War II. In religious affiliations, by far the greatest numbers are either Orthodox or right-wing Conservative; of thirty-odd congregations, only three are Reform and one Reconstructionist. The local Yiddish drama group, celebrating its twenty-fifth consecutive season, can count on several weeks of sellout performances every year. Within the overall "*shtetl* demography" of Montreal (which includes the municipality of Côte St. Luc, with the largest Jewish majority in North America), there is lively social activity of both a synagogue and street-corner variety, and even a rudimentary intellectual ferment that finds expression in a growing number of home-study groups and formal lecture series.

For the many Canadian Jewish writers who grew up in the city or made it their home, the Jewish milieu seemed a sensitive plant, carefully nurtured in the shadow of the Cross. In the subtle but charged struggle between French and English for cultural dominance, the Jew played a special role, sharing the Englishman's tongue but more of the Frenchman's perspective. A. M. Klein, who is recognized as one of Canada's finest poets, explored, sometimes with great lyrical intensity, sometimes with a sense of comic dislocation, the image of the Jew breaking his way into English-style acceptance while recognizing a deeper bond with the French-Canadian "provincial," like himself a singer of some distant ballad:

> all refrain,
> which turns about its longing, and seems to move
> to make a pleasure out of repeated pain. . . .

Poets writing in Yiddish and in English delighted in the spicy cultural distinctiveness of Quebec:

> Layton, my friend Lazarovitch,
> no Jew was ever lost
> while we two dance joyously
> in this French province,
> cold and oceans west of the temple,
> the snow canyoned on the twigs
> like forbidden Sabbath manna;
> I say no Jew was ever lost
> while we weave and billow the handkerchief
> into a burning cloud,
> measuring all of heaven
> with our stitching thumbs.

There may be more echo than original Jewish music in this song by Leonard Cohen, but the climate has inspired him, his fellow poet-dancer Irving Layton, and a host of younger writers to explore the mythology of their own past by comparing it with that of others.

Nor have writers been alone in feeling an almost instinctive sympathy for the French Canadian. Indeed, the Jewish community as a whole has in the past reacted quite positively to the assertion of French Canadian identity. For the first ten years of the "Quiet Revolution" in the 60's, when the predecessor Liberal government generated a program of social, political, and educational reform that literally revolutionized Quebec society, the Jews considered themselves its beneficiaries and were highly responsive to the impulse for reform. Already enjoying the largest percentage of bilingual members among ethnic groups in Quebec, Jews voluntarily undertook to promote French in their schools, agencies, and institutions. Though the acceptance of the "*fait français*" did not proceed as quickly as some would have liked, Jews in general recognized in the French nationalist movement an opportunity for cultural enrichment and even a model for cultural solidarity. At the same time, the Montreal Jewish community was itself enriched by the immigration of some 20,000 French-speaking Jews, largely from North Africa, whose arrival comported well with the changing profile of Quebec. The high point of French Canadian nationalism in the 60's was also the watershed of creative Jewish communal life in Quebec.

But the French Canadian renaissance of the 60's also took another direction. The brief flare of violence a decade ago when the FLQ, the Front for the Liberation of Quebec, planted bombs in mailboxes, kidnapped the British High Commissioner, and murdered the Quebec Minister of Labor, jolted Quebecers out of their political complacency, reminding them of areas of the globe where competing cultures and groups solve their problems in more sinister ways.

Some of the apprehensions of those years linger on in the response of the English and the Jews, and some French-speaking Quebecers as well, to the new government of René Lévesque. To be sure, the

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Parti Québecois has scrupulously dissociated itself from violent tactics, emphasizing its commitment to the democratic process in the struggle for independence. Nonetheless, in promising fair treatment of "Anglophones," government spokesmen do not hesitate to invoke the threat of a popular uprising if the current "oppression" of French Canadians is not alleviated. Some ministers talk openly of the "collective guilt" of the English. As the outward looking, progressive, "Quiet Revolution" gives way to the defensive "new society" that the *Parti Québecois* has proclaimed, a troubled restlessness has come to beset all those who have reason to believe that the embrace of the "new society" may not extend to them.

The Jews, of course, are haunted by a national memory that interprets current events in an ominous light. The decision of the *Parti Québecois, ince" to "Je me souviens"* provokes poignant re- on Quebec's license plates from *"La belle province" to "Je me souviens"* provokes poignant reflection on the different impulses and memories of the two communities. When the French Canadian says, "I remember," he thinks of the glories of New France, the conquest by the English, and the need—as Cabinet Minister Camille Laurin put it —to "reconquer" his heritage and his future. When the Jews remember—and the dialectics of nationalism have certainly stirred their own collective consciousness—they instinctively respond, "Never again." There are things in Jewish history too terrible to be believed but not too terrible to have happened. When the jubilant mass of *Parti Québecois* supporters at the victory rally of November 15 sang a French version of "Tomorrow Belongs To Me," the Nazi party song from *Cabaret* that has unfortunately been adopted as a French Canadian nationalist hymn, it triggered in countless Jewish minds fresh images of storm-troopers and jack-boots in the night.

AT MANY points the agenda of French Canadian nationalism will encounter and possibly conflict with Jewish concerns. In the field of education, where Jews have staked out their most considerable independent claim, it already has. Thanks in large part to the "Quiet Revolution" of the 60's, Quebec's network of privately-financed Jewish day schools has enjoyed "associate status" with Catholic and Protestant schools and has been provided with per-capita subsidies to cover the cost of the general, non-ethnic curriculum. In the early 70's, the government's grants to these schools were made conditional on an increase in the hours of French instruction, but for the new Lévesque government, bilingual English and French instruction is itself unacceptable. French must now *replace* English as the language of secular study; otherwise, the government threatens to withdraw its funding altogether. Having grown dependent on heavy government subsidies, the schools must decide whether to withstand the pressure and be prepared to assume an enormously swollen financial burden, or to embrace the program of full "Francization" and suffer the consequences, which will almost certainly include further social insulation as well as a depreciation of the Jewish component of the curriculum.

Negotiations in this area, where Jews, appearing as Jews, have had their most extensive and intimate contacts with the new government, have been discouraging. Government spokesmen and bureaucrats, seemingly unaware of pedagogic consequences or of the actual level of French competence of the students, have submitted a succession of contradictory "minimal guidelines," some of which call for the virtual elimination of the Jewish curriculum and for the immediate transfer of "Francophone" (Sephardic) children out of those Jewish schools in which English is still the major language of instruction—the vast majority—thus undoing at a stroke a sustained effort on the part of the Jews to create an integrated community out of its two diverse subgroups. With the supposed intention of fostering French, and always with expressions of good will and even appreciation for Jewish accomplishments, the government is pursuing a veiled policy of intimidation; the Jewish community, at the point of greatest sensitivity, sees its autonomy threatened by the very financial support that had appeared to guarantee it.

As the argument over the Jewish day schools shows, the movement of Quebec toward French appears to be irreversible and inevitable, quite apart from the eventual nature of its government. Even Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the chief exponent of federalism and bilingualism, has said that there is nothing wrong in Quebec's being as French as Ontario is English. The White Paper on Language Policy proclaims the institutionalization of French not just in the schools but in every area of society—public administration, commerce, work. The recently introduced language legislation, symbolically titled Bill 1 (now cosmetically redrafted as Bill 101) proposes to enforce unilingualism through a stated policy of surveillance and the denunciation of "offenders."

Responsive as they might be to a graduated and *uncoerced* policy of making French the common language, many Quebec Jews regard English as a cultural gateway essential to Jewish self-expression. They are concerned lest they become isolated from the rest of continental Jewry with whom they enjoy an organic relation and for whom English is the *lingua franca.* While there may be nothing sacred about English as a language from a Jewish viewpoint, it has become an indispensable tool of Jewish communication, even in international affairs. Moreover, as Quebec Jews rather bitterly note, their adoption of the language was not simply a voluntary act or a historical accident but the consequence of legislative fiat.

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For in defining Jews as Protestants within the educational sphere, the government itself had dictated that the language of acculturation be English.

Nonetheless, were it only a question of unforced adjustment to a new linguistic reality, the Jews would probably adapt themselves, as they had already begun to do. They are concerned, however, that "Francization" may be only the initial expression of nationalism, not its ultimate satisfaction. It is presently unclear whether the term *Québecois* refers to all inhabitants of Quebec, as conciliatory public statements advise, or to French Canadians alone, as Bill 101 more concretely proclaims. Several years ago, an earnest Jewish study group in the city invited one of the leading separatist intellectuals, a sociologist from the *Université de Montréal*, to explain French Canadian aspirations. The presentation and discussion were predictably lively; the audience was surprisingly sympathetic. But when one of the most intense of the participants, herself a professor at the French university, asked, "And what can we do to help you?" the speaker replied, "Honestly, nothing. You can be with us but you cannot be of us." The potential for happy integration into an exclusivist society of this kind has been, in Jewish historical experience, slight.

WHAT then of the future? Already a trickling exodus of the most mobile young professionals and businessmen has begun; as yet only the moving companies know for sure its exact size and composition. The process of emigration and Jewish population decline is all the more painful in a community whose sedentary nature expressed a desire for genuine rootedness, not merely an unimaginative attraction to security (for which it was often derided). Nowadays Montreal Jews are turning the joke on themselves. Question: how does a smart Montreal Jew talk to a dumb Montreal Jew? Answer: long distance.

Even supposing that French Canadian nationalism may be seized upon as an advantage by the Jewish community in deepening its own sense of peoplehood, of internal self-reliance, there may nevertheless develop a serious tension between the two groups. Quebec nationalism is becoming more introverted, politically narcissistic. Conversely, Jewish nationalism, perhaps driven to undo by its engaged commitment the sins of passivity of the 30's and 40's, calls upon Jews to become increasingly extroverted, to assume responsibilities for their fellow Jews in Israel, the Soviet Union, and in all other troubled places. If, to the Jews, Quebec nationalism appears insensitive, not to say contrary, so may the Jewish preoccupation with international Jewish causes and the Jewish dedication to cosmopolitanism as a mode of existence appear to the nationalists to be non-*Québecois*, if not actually contrary to Quebec interests.

There has never been any institutionalized or governmental anti-Semitism in Quebec, and Quebec's treatment of its Jewish minority compares favorably with that of other Western democracies. But in both the past and present lie seeds of anxiety concerning the future. Such manifestations of anti-Semitism as there have been have derived from both religious and nationalist sources, now ominously combined in a new political eschatology that has appropriated the religious symbolism of the Church and converted it into a secular nationalism. The emergence of "Palestinian" as the code-word for national liberation among intellectuals, artists, and journalists may signal the movement away from classical anti-Semitism, which denied the equal rights of Jews as citizens within a free society, to the "new" anti-Semitism, which denies the equal right of the Jewish people as a lawful sovereignty within the family of nations.

Whereas the previous generation of Quebec nationalists often found a model in the democratic state of Israel, and in Zionism as a national-liberation movement the present elite identifies the Israeli "settler-state" in Palestine with the Anglophone "settler-community" in Quebec. It is of sufficient concern when the head of the Quebec Teachers' Union attends the Conference on Zionism and Racism held in Libya last summer, becomes a member of the executive of a new organization created to fight "Zionism and racism," and returns to Quebec to state that the equation of Zionism with racism should be taught in all local schools. It is of yet greater concern when that statement—along with others of its kind by equally prominent spokesmen for labor and the media—remains on the record, without repudiation or condemnation from the French Canadian elite within or outside the government. The public character of these statements suggests a certain knowledge on the speakers' parts that the climate is not inhospitable to such expression.

Prime Minister René Lévesque, who enjoys the respect of the Jews as an honest and fair political leader, has revealed an almost callous indifference to Jewish sensibilities. In a newspaper article of September 6, 1972, Lévesque, then a commentator for the daily *Journal de Montréal*, wrote a column in reaction to the Munich massacre of Israeli athletes, in which he said:

> . . . the Palestinians have just once more, before the face of the world, sullied their cause, which in itself was and remains a just cause. Brutally dispossessed for a quarter of a century, confined in exile while a whole new generation was born and grew up, driven to despair since the Six-Day War, the Palestinian nation feels itself forgotten, cut off, betrayed. In the face of Israel's imperial intransigence, the hypocritical collusion of the great powers, and the universal indifference of others, its activists see no other

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recourse but to the most senseless of extremisms.

While no one would dispute the right of a journalist to defend the Palestinian cause, the expression of that defense at that particular moment of mourning shows quite as much insensitivity to Jewish and Israeli feeling as it does sympathy for the Palestinians. In fact, Lévesque in this column comes close to excusing the massacre of the Israeli athletes.

THE Jewish caucuses, then, are stimulated by these and a variety of accompanying concerns: the socialist platform of the *Parti Québecois,* which has received barely passing mention in the American press (and which is all the more remarkable in a province that has never elected a single socialist member of the legislature) may have consequences for a Jewish community linked historically to the capitalist ethic and a private-enterprise economy; the state implementation of the motto, *"maîtres chez nous"*—masters in our own house—may undermine the civil liberties as well as the self-governing nature of Jewish community life; the energy situation and faltering economy may invite heavy Arab investment and corresponding Arab political influence; and perhaps most important, the potential exodus of an entire young elite in this time of instability may result in a paralyzing social attrition.

The current situation gives the lie to a favored Quebec expression, *"plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."* Things *have* changed. The ethnic and religious pluralism which was so hospitable to Jewish creativity and self-determination seems to be giving way to a unidimensional nationalism that eschews minority distinctiveness. Though the claim has been made that since the November election French Canadians have emerged from the state of "adolescence" to a sense of comfortable maturity, many outside the movement are struck rather by the heightened rhetoric and political posturing that may well mask a confusion of purpose, and a troubled as well as troubling leadership. Some observers feel that the push for separation is already effectively beyond arrest, and will either realize itself politically or erupt in civil strife. Others argue, with centuries of Quebec history as precedent, that the pressure of separatism will ultimately spur a reinvigorated federalism, more sensitive than before to the large French minority and to regional distinctiveness of every kind. In all this the Jews are, as René Lévesque has recently noted, "the weathervane." Sensitive to the slightest change, they stand poised, waiting to see which way the winds will blow.

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Are Human Rights Universal?

Peter L. Berger

THE current preoccupation with human rights raises very serious political questions, the most serious of which is whether this new emphasis in American foreign policy signals a turning away from the Kissinger strategy of orderly retreat, or, on the contrary, serves as a smokescreen for the continuation (if not actually the acceleration) of that strategy. My purpose in what follows, however, is not to address myself to the political side of the human-rights campaign but to raise a question of a different order. When we make statements about human rights, are we simply giving voice to a specific set of biases of our own? Or is there some universally valid standard of morality to which we can appeal in making judgments about countries with different traditions from ours?

Some Americans are morally outraged by the repression and the bribery practiced by the government of South Korea. Other Americans tend to view these actions more benignly because of the putatively greater atrocities practiced by the regime in North Korea. However one may view the moral condition of the Korean peninsula, it seems to me rather clear that *both* varieties of American outrage sharply raise the question of ethnocentrism: by what right do we condemn Korean authorities, South *or* North, for not living up to American standards of political morality? After all, neither bribery nor the harsh treatment of political opponents is a startling innovation of Asian statecraft, and both liberal democracy and Marxism, the two ideologies in whose terms the respective Korean states stand either accused or legitimated, are very recent Western exports to that part of the world.

Similarly, some Americans excuse the repressive policies of left-wing regimes in Asia because these regimes have supposedly established a greater measure of equality, and accuse those taking a different position of ethnocentrism—yet it is hard to think of a more blatantly Western value than equality. Other Americans compare left-wing and right-wing regimes in Asia and conclude that the latter, even if they are repressive, allow for a greater degree of individual freedom—another central Western value. Asian observers may be pardoned for thinking that both bodies of opinion are just a new form of cultural imperialism, and that along with Coca-Cola Americans are now busy exporting ideological biases to faraway places where they are neither wanted nor relevant.

THE question of the universal validity of moral judgments is an old one in the history of human thought. It is, indeed, one of the oldest questions of Western philosophy, going back to the twin sources of Western civilization in ancient Israel and ancient Greece. And the question is just as old in the great religious and philosophical traditions of Asia, as in the passionate quest for the oneness of reality in the religious imagination of India, and the (perhaps more secular) efforts to define the nature of humaneness in Chinese ethical thought. These sources, Western and non-Western, are by no means exhausted, and the issue I have raised can still be fruitfully addressed by drawing from them. In the contemporary world, however, that issue has attained an urgency which I believe is new in human history.

The reason for this is to be sought in one main historical factor—the global process of modernization. The "external" effects of modernization are very clear and generally acknowledged: there has been a quantum jump in what anthropologists call "culture contact," as a result of modern technologies of transportation and communication. This means, quite simply, that everyone today is rubbing shoulders with everyone else (or nearly everyone else). On a practical level, therefore, the necessity has arisen of coming to terms with all sorts of people different from oneself. This, however, includes the necessity of coming to terms with them *morally* as well—that is, coming to terms with standards of conduct that are different from one's own.

Of course, one must make distinctions. Not everyone in the world is rubbing shoulders with everyone else in the same way. The overwhelming majority of people in the contemporary world do not, for example, enjoy the pleasures of international air travel, that emblem *par excellence* of modernization; those who do, constitute a very small and highly privileged group. Still, very few

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people in the world today are truly immune from modernization; the same process that hurls mighty jetliners into the sky invades the villages and rice paddies over which they fly, and it does so in innumerable ways—establishing modern political and economic institutions, setting up government agencies and schools, connecting hitherto separated locales with roads and railways, supplying tons of manufactured products, and (ultimately most important of all) drawing people into the massive physical movement of population that is one of the inevitable consequences of modernization.

But the external manifestations of modernization are not the only manifestations; they are accompanied by profound changes of consciousness. One such change is pluralization—the progressive interpenetration of the worlds of *meaning* in which human beings live. Through most of history most people lived in situations that were not only highly integrated in terms of their governing values and their definitions of reality, but were also quite effectively protected against challenges to those values and definitions of reality. The most effective protection was isolation, or at least segregation, from all those "others" who perceived and valued reality differently. Modernization weakens and often shatters the protective walls around all traditionally integrated worlds of meaning; the "others," once distant strangers, now become neighbors in a sometimes uncomfortable way.

The discomfort is not only social, but cognitive and moral as well. For each world of meaning, as it is penetrated by other worlds of meaning, becomes *ipso facto* relativized. Some three centuries ago Pascal (who, if there had been international air travel at the time, would have belonged to the privileged class making use of it) could exclaim, with a sense of discovery, that what is truth on one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other. This discovery has by now become commonplace knowledge.

The consequence for morality is simple but revolutionary. When my neighbors make moral judgments different from mine, then the question of the universal validity of moral judgments (theirs *or* mine) imposes itself urgently. Thus modernization makes reluctant moral philosophers of us all.

MODERNITY originated in Europe. Its basic institutional embodiments are European inventions—science and technology, bureaucracy, the economic systems of both capitalism and socialism, political democracy as well as the nation-state. So are the basic ideologies that legitimate these institutions—including our contemporary notions of human rights. Such statements as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations are derived, with only minor modifications, from the classical documents written on the subject in the West since the 18th century. Probably the earliest public declaration of human rights was the one passed by the legislature of colonial Virginia. Then followed those immensely influential documents originating on both sides of the Atlantic: the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, the preamble to the American Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights in the United States Constitution.

In other words, contemporary notions of human rights are historically and intellectually derived from the Enlightenment, a specifically Western phenomenon. (It goes without saying that this phenomenon has its antecedents in much earlier moments of Western history—in the Temple of Jerusalem, in the *agora* of Athens, in the schools of Jewish rabbis, among Roman jurists and medieval moral philosophers.) And this in turn points to the fact that, whether one likes it or not, the process of modernization has everywhere been, at least in part, a process of Westernization as well. Today, almost without exception, even the goriest Oriental despot pays lip-service to the values of human rights—in language borrowed from Thomas Jefferson or Karl Marx.

To be sure, there are exceptions to this international Jeffersonian-Marxian consensus—the traditionalists (often called "fundamentalists" in the Western press) who would restore the classical caste system in India or replace the modernizing constitutions of Muslim nation-states by the Shari'a. Most of these traditionalists are unsophisticated; even those who are sophisticated speak in a highly particularistic language which, by its very nature, is opaque to the outsider. Hence, the traditionalist protest against modernity is easily dismissed intellectually (even if it can make a lot of trouble politically). Yet it should not be so quickly dismissed. Even if one has neither cultural affinity nor ideological sympathy with any of the traditionalists' causes, their perception of the world is instructive and important. For it is the traditionalists, with the sharp eye of hostility, who see more clearly than anyone else the linkage of modernization and Westernization.

Most of the political leadership of Asian and African countries, however, and a sizable portion of the intellectuals in those countries, are not traditionalists in this sense. Rather, they subscribe to the viewpoint of "modernization without Westernization"—a viewpoint that has both right-wing and left-wing expressions. On the Left, this viewpoint is at the heart of the Maoist rebellion against Soviet ideological hegemony; it is replicated, *mutatis mutandis*, in other forms of Asian and African socialism. On the Right, it has found an eloquent spokesman in the Shah of Iran, who, with some justification, aspires to a leading role among Muslim rulers seeking a path somewhere between Westernizing modernism and de-modernizing traditionalism; for better or worse, the Shah has been particularly eloquent of late in rejecting the applicability to Iran of a number of Western notions

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of human rights. And the same viewpoint is a common element in an otherwise wildly heterogeneous medley of ideologies—the neo-Shintoism of the late Yukio Mishima or the various Third World strands of Gandhiism, Arabism, and *Négritude*.

In regularly dismissing human-rights issues when they are raised by Westerns as irrelevant to their own countries, these leaders and intellectuals force us once again to face the question of how one may make moral judgments with a claim to universal validity. Indeed, they raise the even sharper question of whether the very habit of making universally relevant moral judgments may not be a specifically Western propensity.

Most intellectual problems are carried further toward solution by the making of distinctions, and this one is no exception. A crucial distinction to be made here is between those notions of human rights that emerge exclusively from a Western view of the world, and which will only be plausible to those sharing this view, and those notions of human rights that derive their warrant from a wider consensus. To draw this distinction fully and conclusively is beyond my abilities. But I believe that steps should be taken toward such a distinction, and need to be taken, if we are to gain clarity on this subject. As a first step I would propose separating those rights that derive from the specifically Western values of liberty and equality from those that pertain to the human condition as such.

The former category undoubtedly includes those rights that have emerged from the Western development of political democracy—the ones which in America are commonly designated as civil liberties and civil rights. Freedom of speech and of the press, the inviolability of the electoral process, equal protection of the law, due process (which includes the peculiarly Western value of impersonality in the administration of justice)—all these (and the list could be easily extended) are rights that find little warrant outside the orbit of Western history.

To this list must be added the economic rights of which the Left is so enamored. The notion that economic justice demands an ever-greater measure of equality is as specifically Western as the notion that liberty is the highest political value; non-Western man, almost everywhere, has been *homo hierarchicus*. And, needless to say, the same list must include those rights recently proclaimed by various cultural revolutionaries in the West—women's rights, the rights of children, or the rights of homosexuals and other deviants.

To many non-Westerners, even today, our understanding of political and economic rights is puzzling (which is why, for example, it is very difficult indeed to explain Watergate in Asia); to most non-Westerners, the rights proclaimed by our cultural revolutionaries are symptoms of degeneracy or collective madness. At any rate, these rights are plausible only to those who (whether by inheritance or by adoption) stand within a specifically Western view of the world.

Yet the grossest cases called violations of human rights today are of an altogether different kind. Genocide; the massacre of large numbers of innocent people by their own government or by alien conquerors; the deliberate abandonment of entire sections of a population to starvation; the systematic use of terror (including torture) as government policy; the expulsion of large numbers of people from their homes; enslavement through various forms of forced labor; the forced separation of families (including the taking away of children from their parents by actions of government); the deliberate desecration of religious symbols and the persecution of those adhering to them; the destruction of institutions that embody ethnic identity. Each one of these items is routine policy in many countries today.

It is my contention that, in condemning *these* as violations of human rights, we can call upon a consensus far wider than that of Western civilization. That consensus emerges from all the major world cultures, especially in their religious foundations—and it is a consensus all the more impressive in view of the vast (and partly irreconcilable) differences among the world religions in their understanding of reality and of human destiny.

When we condemn the horrors inflicted on the people of Cambodia by their present government, we need not do so by reference to Western values alone. Cambodia is a Buddhist country, and it is Buddhism that has as its highest moral tenet the "respect for all sentient beings." Similarly, the atrocities inflicted on the Chinese people in the course of various Maoist experiments, such as the physical extermination of entire classes of the population or the separation of children from their parents, are not just violations of Western notions of morality (or, as apologists for Maoism in the West like to say, of "bourgeois morality"); rather, they are violations of the entire corpus of ethics of the Chinese tradition, which holds, among other things, that government should be "human-hearted" and that "filial piety" is one of the highest human goods. And if we pass moral judgment on a Muslim ruler (be it in a left-wing or a right-wing regime) for acts of cruelty, we may do so, not alone in the name of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but in the name of the ethical core of Islam itself: every call to prayer, from every minaret from the Maghreb to Java, begins with an invocation of God who is *al-rahman al-rahim*, whose nature is to be compassionate and who has compassion, and who commands men to be compassionate also.

Drawing a distinction of the kind I have suggested between two sets of rights would, at the very least, help prevent the sorts of intellectual confusion perpetrated by the press in its

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reports on "violations of human rights," a catch-all category ample enough to cover such disparate and disproportionate phenomena as the expulsion of an American journalist from Nigeria, mass murder in Uganda, election irregularities in Pakistan, genocide in Cambodia, and the inability of women in some Muslim countries to obtain a passport without the permission of their fathers or husbands. But more important, a truer understanding of the moral convergence of the human race on the question of *fundamental* human rights is essential if Americans (in or out of government) are to speak credibly on the international scene.

I HAVE argued for a distinction between fundamental human rights and rights stemming from specifically Western developments, notably political democracy, This argument needs to be qualified, or extended, in two ways.

There is, first of all, an undeniable empirical correlation, and a high one, between countries that respect those human rights I have called fundamental and countries that have institutions of political democracy. Many people in the West would maintain that this correlation shows the essential equivalence of the two sets of rights. This, I think, is mistaken. The correlation is rather to be explained sociologically, in terms of the peculiar character of the modern state.

In pre-modern societies there existed a variety of restraints on the arbitrary exercise of political power: religious authority, custom, kinship and tribe, and (most important) the sheer inability of government to extend its controls into every remote corner of society. Modernization weakens or destroys these restraints. The modern state (and not just the repressive or the totalitarian version of it) thus exercises historically unprecedented power—with the implication that human rights are more than ever before at the mercy of unrestrained rulers. It was, indeed, precisely in order to impose restraints upon governmental power that modern democratic institutions arose in the West. Consequently, the high empirical correlation between democracy and a respect for human rights is not surprising—which is not the same thing as saying that it is necessary or complete.

A historical illustration may serve here. In ancient China there was an institution known as the imperial censors. These were Confucian scholars attached to the court, whose express task it was to criticize the emperor and his officials for derelictions of duty. It is not necessary to assume that these worthy gentlemen were immune to coercion or corruption in order to say that we have here a classical case of pre-modern restraint on government. We may then ask a sociological question: under modern conditions, what are the possible functional equivalents of the imperial censors? The sociological answer is that such equivalents, very broadly speaking, will resemble the basic institutional arrangements of modern democracy.

The second qualification is this. To say, as I have said, that certain rights are "plausible" only within a specifically Western view of the world is not to say that any moral judgment emanating from the Western tradition is for that reason deprived of universal validity. On the contrary, if the moral discoveries of the Western tradition—prominent among them the ideas of individual liberty and of the fundamental equality of all human beings—are valid for us, they are valid for all mankind. If we believe in the fundamental unity of the human race, we must also believe that the liberty that is a good in America would also, in principle, be a good in Asia.

This, however, is still a long way from the belief that our own specific social and political arrangements exhaust the possible institutionalizations of morality, and that we are therefore entitled (if not mandated) to preach those arrangements to the rest of the world. Sociological fact is not the same thing as absolute truth. The difference I would establish here is not between moral conviction on the one hand and an attitude of relativistic laissez-faire on the other, but between ethnocentrism and a respect for the moral scope—the remarkably consensual moral scope—of all the great human civilizations. And this difference is not just a matter of theoretical perspective; it affects the entire manner in which human rights can be argued on the international scene today, and for that reason has considerable political significance.

The question of ethnocentrism in relation to human rights is a complex one, but this complexity need not be paralyzing. On the contrary, the credibility of Americans speaking out on human rights will increase if they speak soberly and with a proper sense of the universal human search for moral truth.

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The Unknown Catacombs

Michael Ledeen

ITALIAN Jews are finding it very difficult to examine and preserve the records of their own history. The town of Venosa in the South of Italy, for example, boasts a group of ancient catacombs of exceptional historic importance. Known for centuries as the catacombs of Santa Ruffina, and generally believed to be of Christian origin, they were actually used by Italian Jews both as a burial ground and religious meeting place from about the 3rd to the 11th centuries. From the evidence unearthed at Venosa we learn, among other things, that there was a renaissance of Hebrew in Italy during the early Middle Ages, and that there was far more Jewish cultural activity going on there than the standard texts had led us to believe. Yet today the catacombs of Santa Ruffina are in imminent danger of destruction, and the priceless material they contained is being tucked away in museums and monasteries throughout the Italian peninsula —part of a vast cultural and historical patrimony which may soon be lost to the Jews forever.

How little we know and how much still remains to be learned about the history of ancient and medieval Jewish communities in Italy was symbolized by the discovery—no more than fifteen years ago —of the existence of a substantial Jewish community in the ancient Roman port city of Ostia Antica, complete with a synagogue which is the oldest extant monotheistic structure in Europe. Among other things, the findings at Ostia Antica necessitate a revision of the historical commonplace that the Jews came to Rome in large numbers only after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., for the Jewish community at Ostia Antica antedates that event by about a hundred years.

Yet until this community was discovered, Ostia Antica had been considered just another Roman outpost, inhabited first by Romans, then by Christians. No one thought to look for evidence of Jewish life because Jews for the most part are not included in the mainstream of Italian history except as a curiosity —a tiny handful of people who from time to time have produced something or someone of interest.

This systematic exclusion, which serves the ideological purposes of both Jews and Gentiles on occasion, can take place only so long as the actual evidence from the ancient world goes unexamined. Once the Pandora's box is opened, we discover that the Jews figured prominently in the political, economic, and religious history of the Roman empire as well as of Rome itself, and that they constituted a surprisingly large percentage of the population of the ancient world. (Of some seventy million inhabitants of the Roman empire at its peak, according to recent studies, seven million were Jews—as compared with the four million citizens of the city of Rome itself.)

All of this suggests that there is historical treasure buried in the ruins of Italy, but it has been exceedingly difficult to get at. Even where excavations have taken place, the material uncovered has more often than not proved inaccessible to the Jewish community. A case in point is that of the Jewish catacombs at Monteverde, a once-splendid ruin dating back to the end of the Roman republic. According to the German archaeologist, Nikolaus Mueller, these catacombs are of inestimable importance in establishing the Jewish presence in ancient Rome. Hidden for nearly twenty centuries, the incredible trove at Monteverde was first uncovered in the early 1600's, when Rome was undergoing its baroque transformation under the hand of Pope Urban VIII and his twin architectural geniuses Bernini and Borromini. No sooner had the curtain of silence been lifted, however, when it dropped again, and we hear no more of Monteverde for another century or so, when an Italian architect bemoaned the deterioration of this priceless historical relic. By the time Mueller rediscovered the catacombs in the early 1900's, they were in a pitiable state, but, with the help of the Academy of Jewish Science of Berlin, he was fortunate enough to carry out substantial excavations for the next several years. By the 1930's the catacombs had deteriorated further and the excavations stopped. Today, for all practical purposes, they no longer exist.

The Monteverde necropolis provided a gold mine for historians of the Jewish communities of ancient Rome. Thanks to these catacombs we know the names of many of the families who lived in the ancient city, and that they spoke Greek rather than Latin or Hebrew; we know the names of all thirteen (!) of the synagogues of ancient Rome, as well as the occupations, habits, and modes of dress adopted by members of the Jewish community. But the story of Monteverde also has contemporary significance—as an example of the reluctance of the Italian cultural world to undertake a serious reconsideration of the history of the Jews of Rome. The catacombs of Monteverde could still have been saved in the 1930's—indeed, a prominent archaeologist at the University of Rome remarked at the time that they were in better condition than many of the Christian catacombs in the city. But despite these warnings, no measures were taken to protect the Monteverde site. And though it might be tempting to attribute this failure to Fascism, the fact is that Italian Fascism in the 1920's and 1930's had

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not yet turned anti-Semitic. No, the tragedy of Monteverde is not the result of modern politics; it is part of a much older and much more durable Italian tradition.

The pattern becomes clearer when one considers other Italian Jewish treasures from the ancient world. In 1882 a group of archaeologists found a Jewish catacomb on the Via Labicana, slightly more than a mile from Porta Maggiore. After waiting two years to examine it, the archaeologists pronounced the catacomb of considerable historic importance, yet all traces of the site have since vanished, and are probably buried beneath the network of roads that have been constructed in the area in the intervening century. The same destiny has also befallen the Jewish necropolis of Via San Sebastiano, adjacent to the famous Catholic catacombs, which are an obligatory tourist stop to this day. Interestingly enough, there are some Jewish tombstones and wall inscriptions still visible on Via San Sebastiano today, but hardly anybody ever sees them for the simple reason that the candles provided at the site are relatively short and tend to burn down at about the time one reaches the Jewish artifacts.

THOSE who wish to examine Jewish catacombs in Rome today must go either to the Via Appia Antica (in the heart of cinema mogul territory) or to the Via Nomentana in the park of the Villa Torlonia. To gain entry to the Via Appia catacombs a series of formal requests must first be lodged with the Pontifical Commission of Sacred Archaeology, which is in charge of all the catacombs in Rome, and whose functionaries make it a point to warn visitors of all the problems involved. In the case of the Villa Torlonia, there used to be a problem crossing Prince Torlonia's private property; recently, however, the city of Rome has converted the estate into a public park and the catacombs are open one morning each week. But the relics from Villa Torlonia may not even be available for this limited viewing; a few years ago a small door was built leading from the street to the entrance into the catacombs, probably for the use of Vatican archaeologists who have been quietly digging at the site for five years.

The Jewish catacombs on the Via Appia, which are known only to students of Roman archaeology or Jewish history, are even more difficult to find. They are not mentioned in any of the tourist guides to Rome, and there are no signs indicating their existence (or, for that matter, the existence of the other Jewish catacombs); nobody —not even the experts of Rome's Jewish community—will tell you about them unless you pry the information out of them.

The Appia catacombs are in bad shape. A few years ago representatives of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities managed to obtain funds for their restoration and attempted to get in touch with the Vatican Commission on Sacred Archaeology for this purpose. In keeping with tradition, nothing came of these contacts, and the catacombs continue to deteriorate.

Considerable work has gone on at all these sites, however, performed almost entirely by Vatican experts. Under their supervision, the objects from the Jewish catacombs of Rome, like the material originating elsewhere in the country, have been dispersed among the various museums of the Catholic Church all over the peninsula. Much of this material is to be found in Rome itself—there used to be a Jewish Hall at the Lateran Museum in Rome, for example, which contained a good many epigraphical relics from the Monteverde catacombs. The rest of it is in monastical museums and small churches elsewhere in Italy. But wherever these relics are stored, they are not much talked about, for the Vatican has shown little interest in bringing them to the light of day.

Not too long ago, the Vatican Museum opened a huge exhibit of religious cultures of the world which took up miles of space in the endless corridors leading to the Sistine Chapel. In all this vast expanse, the Jewish exhibit consisted of one small display case, containing a meager handful of Jewish artifacts, and tucked away in a corner at the end of one of the halls. No suggestion was offered that the Vatican Museum actually contains countless treasures from Jewish antiquity or that the city of Rome is full of things which bear witness to an important Jewish presence both in Rome itself and in the rest of the country.

To remedy this situation and to enable Jews fully to explore and to preserve their historical patrimony in Italy, a change in the law is required. The Concordat of 1929 between the Italian Fascist government and the Vatican stipulated that the Church would have full control over Italian catacombs, and this provision is still in full force. At the moment, negotiations are under way to revise the Concordat, in order to provide for a greater separation between church and state, and to guarantee greater integrity for the religious minority groups in Italy. Many had hoped that these negotiations would provide an opportunity to transfer the administration of the Jewish catacombs from the Vatican to the Italian government, which could then engage the participation of the Jewish organizations. To date, however, statements on this subject by Giulio Andreotti (the President of the Council of Ministers) and by Vatican officials have been anything but clear. The chairman of the Pontifical Commission, Father Umberto Fasola, has given two interviews on the subject, elucidating two separate positions. To the Roman Jewish magazine *Shalom* he said that "if the Jewish community wishes to share the responsibility or assume all of it, the present situation can be modified." But to the radical-chic daily *La Republica* he came down sharply against relinquishing Vatican control over the catacombs:

> Within ten years they would all be ruined. For 150 years we of the Vatican have been digging in the Roman earth. How could they undertake new projects and keep up the existing catacombs without the help of our Commission?

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> I am opposed to giving them up, for the same reason for which they were entrusted to us; that is, because only the Pontifical Commission is capable of dealing with the catacombs in Italy.

To those who have followed the attempts of Italian Jews to gain some small control over their cultural patrimony in recent years, Father Fasola's shift in position should come as no surprise. Time and time again the Vatican has made promises to the Jews in public, only to rebuff them in private. Indeed, the pattern is so consistent that there is a suspicion in some quarters that theological motives are involved. What could these be?

Part of the answer comes from Father Fasola himself, who has never opposed ceding the actual relics stored in Vatican museums to Jewish institutions, though he is against handing over the catacombs themselves. Could it be that there is something else buried in the soil of Italy along with these artifacts (for which no catalogue exists) that the Vatican wishes to keep there? If so, in all likelihood it is evidence that Jewish and Christian histories in the first centuries of the "Christian era" are cut from a single piece of cloth, theologically speaking, and that the convenient division which has hitherto prevailed between the two might have to be abandoned. There are Jewish sarcophagi in Rome, for example, dating from the 2nd and 3rd centuries, which are covered with figurative representations (despite scriptural injunctions against such art), and strongly resemble Christian funereal art of the same period. An important unresolved question, as one scholar has written, is whether

> . . . these Jewish paintings, and their far more abundant and varied counterparts in the Christian catacombs in Rome, share a common Jewish source that has now vanished. Like other early Christian art, they show little awareness of the Gospels (other than John) and display an extraordinary, total avoidance of the death of Jesus, or even of his arrest and trial. For evidently these events were still regarded by many, for all that the New Testament has said, as horrible and hideous defeats. . . . These themes have been traced back, conjecturally but plausibly, to lost Jewish paintings in catacombs, or, conceivably, in illuminated editions of the Septuagint. . . .

If such a common Jewish origin were proved, then early Christianity—which avoided dealing with the question of the death of Jesus—would have to be treated as part of a Jewish tradition in which a presumed messiah was revealed to be false, and his death viewed as a condemnation of those who had believed in him. This Judeo-Christianity would itself have to be analyzed in terms of the much older tradition of the Roman Jewish community, to which, in all probability, John addressed his "good news."

It is unfortunately not possible to test any of these fascinating hypotheses at present, because the catacombs are in the hands of an interested party. Indeed, there are some in Italy who believe the Vatican is systematically eliminating evidence which might necessitate revising the official history of Christianity in Rome, just as in earlier times the Church sacked the monuments of pagan Rome to make it a more visibly Christian city. Such suspicions are probably misguided, but they flourish under an arrangement which gives the Vatican total control over what is excavated, what is preserved, and what is opened to public view.

TO CHANGE this arrangement and wrest control of the Jewish catacombs from the Vatican has been the life's work of a single individual, Henryk K. Geller, a former Austrian, now Israeli, who has lived in Rome for over forty years. For nearly two decades Geller, who is the author of *Jewish Rome,* has been trying to convince the Jews of Italy that they should be administering the catacombs and studying and displaying their treasures themselves. Thus far, however, Geller's efforts to persuade the Jewish community to raise the funds and find the skilled personnel necessary for the purpose have met with little success, in part because the Italian Jewish community is not particularly well off, in part because its leaders, conditioned by centuries of life in the shadow of St. Peter's, prefer to maintain a low profile, and in part because the Italian government has not been eager to engage in such battles with the Church. Moreover, with the rising incidence of anti-Semitism in Italy, and the almost universal antagonism to Israel which exists among both Catholic and left-wing politicians, Jewish leaders have been reluctant to put themselves in the spotlight. Typically, when interviewed by the New York *Times* in early March, both the Chief Rabbi of Rome and the President of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities said that there were no problems worth mentioning, that everything was going well, and that the Church had taken exemplary care of Jewish catacombs and treasures.

Fortunately, however, some small grounds for optimism do exist. The small but influential Republican party has launched a vigorous campaign for the de-Vaticanization of the Jewish catacombs, and has received support from a handful of distinguished intellectuals. Former Minister of Cultural Riches Giovanni Spadolini, himself a Republican, has thrown his considerable prestige behind the project, and given it the benefit of his long experience. In Spadolini's words:

> The revision of the Concordat and a policy for cultural riches must be more than ever anchored to that religion of liberty, in whose name it may prove necessary to translate Croce's phrase "we cannot fail to call ourselves Jews."

Finally, the Italian Jewish organizations could undoubtedly benefit from the support and the vigor of other Jewish institutions which have had experience in organizing such cultural undertakings. Surely it is absurd that the ancient synagogues of Prague and Toledo have been restored to Jewish hands while the most ancient community of the Diaspora remains cut off from its own history.

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Socialist Surrealism

Joshua Rubenstein

In a recent essay published in the Russian emigré journal *Kontinent* and titled "The Literary Process in Russia," Andrei Sinyavsky points out that labor camps and prisons are the predominant theme of the manuscripts that circulate unofficially in the Soviet Union. It is easy to understand why. Since the revolution in 1917, imprisonment and its effects have been, for Soviet writers, either the most overwhelming personal experience or a metaphor for life itself. In 1962, when Alexander Solzhenitsyn published his novel, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (the first officially permitted exploration of a prisoner's fate), the bookstores were besieged by customers and the publishing houses engulfed by a flood of manuscripts about life in Stalin's prisons and labor camps. Only a relative handful were published before the regime decided that things had gone far enough.

Today the manuscripts that circulate in *samizdat* reflect the need among large sections of the population to tell the truth in the face of the regime's dissembling, and that truth continues to be expressed through the literary exposure of Stalinism and its lingering effects in contemporary Russian life. This situation, however, worries Sinyavsky. "The danger threatening modern Russian literature"—by which he means "banned literature"—"is of assuming the role of a sort of whining complaints book supposedly to be perused by the leaders (who don't give a damn anyway) or to be stored away in a cupboard until the advent of those better times when people will have learned to live by the light of truth." Sinyavsky fears that writers, "having exorcised [themselves] from the lie," may "succumb to the temptation of the truth," that literary values may become subordinated to the writer's didactic intentions (however laudable), and that a species of writing may evolve which will really be nothing more than a mirror image to the school of socialist realism which the regime has long prescribed as the Soviet literary ideal.

The ideal was attacked by Sinyavsky over twenty years ago in an earlier essay, "On Socialist Realism." There he criticized the official literary dogma and encouraged writers not to feel constrained by the themes and styles "recommended" to them by the party. But he also made an oblique attack on realism itself, speaking out against a revival of a naturalist school in Russian letters and for a replacement of "realistic descriptions of ordinary life" by a commitment to the "grotesque." Instead of the objective truths of realism, literature should "teach us how to be truthful with the aid of the absurd and the fantastic," he wrote. For Sinyavsky, reality was a "hectoring taskmaster," an albatross around the necks of writers whose primary allegiance should be to the urgings of their imagination.

A number of Soviet works of fiction recently translated and published in this country show the extent to which Sinyavsky's plea of twenty years ago has been acted upon by Soviet writers. They illustrate as well the limits of such a position in a country where reality continues to create and impose conditions that far outstrip the capacity of the imagination for the "absurd and fantastic."

Ilya Suslov's novel, *Here's to your Health, Comrade Shifrin!*,* takes us from the years just before Stalin's death until the late 1960's. Through a series of satirical episodes, Suslov describes the gradual disillusionment with Soviet society of one Tolya Shifrin. Tolya moves in the book through high school and college, employment in a printing shop and then in a publishing house, finally landing a job on the editorial staff of a newspaper. All the while he encounters the small lies and hypocrisies of everyday Moscow life: in high school, the students know they can regurgitate the copybook slogans of Soviet propaganda in order to insure high grades; in the printing shop, the system of production norms invites manipulation of the accounting books which, with a little bribery, the cost controller can then fix.

Suslov's targets are not always trivial. As a young man, Tolya genuinely believes the party line, and the most effective parts of the book—they may constitute a genuine confession by the author—are about Tolya's gullibility. "To us [the Kremlin] was a great mystery; we knew only that Stalin lived there. When we would walk past the Kremlin and see a lighted window, someone invariably would say with love and respect, 'Stalin is working.' We thought that Stalin never slept; there was always a lighted window in the Kremlin." There is more pathos than irony in this, for when Tolya is denied entrance to the university because he is a Jew he firmly believes that "if only [Stalin] knew what kind of scoundrels he had under him, he would let them have it." When Stalin dies, Tolya even fears that "Russia will perish without him."

Suslov's book is valuable for its accurate recall of both the fearful and the comic aspects of life in Russia, but his anecdotes lack internal coherence and he has no particular point to make other than the rather ordinary one that Soviet life does not measure up to its self-proclaimed image. His style ranges from the nervous and manic (when he is trying to be humorous) to the melodramatic (as in the short, serious encounter Tolya has with

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* Translated by Maxine Bronstein, Indiana University Press, 204 pp., $8.95.

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an old Jewish woman at the height of the Doctors' Plot affair). When Suslov tries to deal with genuinely sinister topics, his powers as a satirist understandably desert him, and he becomes earnest and solemn; the result, however, is a curiously soft and unconvincing evocation of something the author obviously feels deeply about and wishes mightily (but vainly) to convey to his reader.

AMONG Soviet writers, only Solzhenitsyn has been able to to give literary expression both to hatred of Stalin (in Solzhenitsyn's case it is a hatred bordering on contempt) and to the feeling of awe which Stalin exacted among many Russians. In the famous portrait of the dictator in *The First Circle,* Solzhenitsyn creates a figure of absolute vanity and evil, whose paranoia and intellectual pretense, however absurd they are made to seem, still carry the scent of death. In contrast to Solzhenitsyn, the satirist Vladimir Voinovich, in *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin,** takes nothing about Stalin seriously, not even those events and institutions associated with his regime, whose very mention is usually enough to evoke feelings of revulsion and dread in the average reader.

The hero of the book, Ivan Chonkin, is an insult to the Red Army. Short, bow-legged, with red ears, he cannot even salute properly. When a disabled military aircraft is forced to land on a collective farm, Chonkin, the most dispensable man at the base, is sent to guard the plane. His first night there he moves in with Nyura, the village postmistress, and, forgotten by the army, assumes a new, comfortable life among the animals, drunkards, and charlatans who inhabit the place.

Voinovich has created a masterly collection of lunatics: Golubev, the *kolkhoz* chairman, who believes that anyone he sees in a uniform has been sent to arrest him; Granny Dunya, whose home brew and instinct for hoarding keep everyone off balance; Borka, the pig, who drives Chonkin mad with jealousy; Gladishev, the crackpot agronomist, who devotes himself to breeding "a plant which would grow the tubers of a potato on the bottom at the same time as tomatoes grow from the top."

Yet Voinovich's satire extends beyond these essentially comic-opera aspects of Soviet life to such grisly subjects as forced collectivization, the secret police, Hitler's invasion of Russia, and Stalin himself. Thus, at a class in political training, Chonkin asks the instructor if Stalin once had two wives. The instructor denounces him for lack of ideological vigilance, and his question remains unanswered until later, in a dream, the instructor appears to inform Chonkin that "Stalin never had any wives because he himself is a woman." At this moment Stalin descends from the sky with moustache and pipe, wearing a dress.

Other Soviet writers, like Sinyavsky in *The Makepeace Experiment,* for example, or Yuli Daniel, have written effective satire of Soviet personalities and institutions. But Voinovich has added a new dimension, trying to match the truly monstrous aspects of Soviet history by creating satire of equally extravagant proportions, as when he has Stalin make an entrance as a drag queen. Yet it cannot be said that Voinovich's satire has altogether succeeded in confronting the full criminality of Soviet history. When his imagination touches evil, it instinctively retreats—as if Voinovich were determined to stand history on its head and have a laugh at it, but then get out from under before it crashes down on top of him.

Voinovich's short new book, *The Ivankiad,*† returns to the more manageable subjects of Soviet satire. Based on personal experience, it has to do with housing difficulties in Moscow, and in particular with the efforts of one Ivanko, a spoiled Soviet diplomat, to expand his four-room apartment in order to accommodate an American toilet. For the narrator (Voinovich), whose own attempt to secure an apartment has been frustrated by this turn of events, Ivanko is an exemplar of the new Soviet man, a figure who is neither "a dogmatist" nor "an orthodox person" but a "humble drudge" who "under the guise of struggling against alien ideology" (namely capitalism), is all the while trying to get something from you: "an apartment, a wife, a cow, an invention, a position, an academic title." In the end the narrator triumphs, but only after months of frantic effort. His story is both hilarious and instructive; not only does Voinovich tell it well, embellishing it with the elements of fantasy that characterize *Chonkin,* but in so doing he also exposes a set of attitudes that permeate the life of Soviet citizens more thoroughly than repression itself.

IF, AS the examples of Suslov and Voinovich suggest, the satiric impulse tends to founder when it comes to the beastlier aspects of Soviet reality, this is not to say that only a strict adherence to the canons of classical realism can adequately convey in art the "truth" of Soviet experience (although the work of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, especially in *Cancer Ward* and *The First Circle,* constitutes a powerful argument to that effect). The fact of the matter, as Sinyavsky knew when he wrote his 1956 essay "On Socialist Realism," is that Soviet writers have had little exposure to the post-realist school of modernist writing in the West—Kafka has only recently been translated and published, while Joyce has yet to appear "officially." A handful of Russian novelists, including Andrei Bely and Boris Pilnyak, have written genuinely modernist books, refashioning narrative into unconventional progressions and shaping language to express abnormal forms of consciousness, but their work is not published in the Soviet Union today, and as a consequence Russian writers find it difficult to explore those alternatives to realism which have evolved within their own literary culture.

Given these circumstances, Sasha Sokolov's first novel, *School for Fools,*** is all the more impressive an achievement. The principal narrator of the book is a former student at a special school for psychotic children. His reminiscences, told in the form of inner dialogues be-

* Translated by Richard Lourie, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 316 pp., $10.00.

† Translated by David Lapeza, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 132 pp., $10.00.

** Translated by Carl Proffer, Ardis, 228 pp., $10.00.

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tween his two selves, provide the occasion for an exploration of the linguistic consequences of schizophrenia. In whole sections of the book a natural sense of time collapses; characters have two names, and incongrous associations appear, develop, and then vanish, only to reemerge later on.

If *School for Fools* can be said to have a plot in any conventional sense, it revolves around these inner dialogues of the schizophrenic student, who remains nameless throughout. For a number of years he and his parents have spent their summer vacation at a *dacha* in the countryside. His father is a prosecutor who passes whole days in a hammock, reading newspapers. He cannot tolerate "relatives or disorder, because wherever there's disorder there's drinking." Sometimes he makes his son rewrite "the lead articles from newspapers, so that we would have a better understanding of internal and external *polyticks*." His son, though, dislikes newspapers and in one of several explicitly political episodes in the book the father and son have the following conversation:

> And then I asked father about the newspapers. What about the newspapers?—he responded. And I said: you're always reading newspapers. Yes, I do, he replied, I read newspapers, and so what. Isn't it true that there's nothing written there?—I asked him. Why do you say that, said father, everything is written there, whatever is needed—is written. And if, I asked, something is written there, then why read it: it's scoundrels that write it. And then father said: what scoundrels? And I replied: those who write. Father asked: write what? And I replied: the newspapers.

The son does not want to be reconciled with his father. From his geography teacher, who has become his mentor, he learns "how never to lie about anything." This teacher, Pavel or Savel Norvegov (his names are the Russian versions of Paul and Saul) is the second principal character of the novel. The prosecutor, as well as the other parents and his own colleagues at school, dislike him intensely (among other things, for keeping a weathervane on his roof). "Pavel is a free man, a dreamer," the father says. "He's going to die with his feet bare. He's an idler, your Pavel." Sitting on the window sill in the school bathroom, Norvegov delivers to his students a series of extraordinary sermons and parables that underline and extend the implicit identification of this character with the founding figures of Christianity:

> My dears, you might not believe me, your goatish, retired drummer, cynic, and troublemaker, wind-driver and windvane, but believe the other person in me—the indigent citizen and poet who came in order to enlighten, to cast a spark into hearts and minds, so that people would be enflamed with hatred and a zeal for freedom. Now I shout with all my blood, the way one shouts of vengeance to come: there is nothing in the world, there is nothing in the world—except The Wind!

School for Fools defies classification. In part, it is a love story, in part it is a book about madness and dissociation and their effect on memory. Yet whether its focus is psychological, romantic, or political, Russian readers of *School for Fools* will no doubt remember most of all its linguistic and narrative innovations, the way in which Sokolov has turned the language of everyday conversation into a witty, subtle, and dynamic collage of imagery and rhetoric, and its plea on behalf of freedom.

School for Fools does not ignore historical reality. One character, Academician Acatov, is a botanist who spent years in a labor camp for propounding a theory that contradicted the prevailing dogma. Near the end of the novel, the author himself interrupts the narrative to speculate upon what will happen if his book should reach the authorities: "There will be great unpleasantness for me, up to and including the most unpleasant. I'm afraid they'll immediately ship me off there. . . ." In addition, the book is suffused with a semi-playful iconoclasm toward the symbols of Soviet authority. So it is hardly coincidental that the father who contributes to his son's schizophrenia is a prosecutor, or that the child's hero is a barefoot geography teacher who preaches freedom and abandonment. Yet Sokolov's novel is not didactic, nor does it "succumb to the temptation of the truth," in Sinyavsky's phrase. Rather, in *School for Fools* Sokolov resolves the dilemma facing today's Soviet writer by making historical truth successfully serve the needs of the imagination.

Although Sokolov left the Soviet Union almost two years ago, manuscript copies of his novel are known to be circulating there. It will be interesting to see how his talent develops in the West, now that he has escaped from the oppressive society that paradoxically nurtured his creative energy. For many Soviet writers, the more relaxed political atmosphere of the West, with its physical comforts and easy distractions, tends to reduce the anxious need to create that was the hallmark of their intellectual life in Moscow. Some, like Suslov or Voinovich—the former is already in the West, the latter still in Russia—who seem inextricably connected to the specific details of Soviet life, may be compelled to seek new themes and styles. In the case of Sokolov, a writer whose imagination appears less dependent on his immediate surroundings, emigré life, far from draining his creative energy, may offer new inspiration to an already distinctive and original talent.

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Books in Review

Campaign Journalism

CONVENTION. By RICHARD REEVES. *Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 246 pp. $10.00.*

MARATHON: THE PURSUIT OF THE PRESIDENCY, 1972-1976. By JULES WITCOVER. *Viking. 684 pp. $14.95.*

Reviewed by NELSON W. POLSBY

ANYBODY who says that the American political system is hopelessly mired in the status quo cannot have been paying much attention to presidential nominating politics. When Aaron Wildavsky and I wrote the first edition of our book, *Presidential Elections,* in the early 1960's, we were able to rely on all sorts of conventional wisdom about the nomination process. Primary elections were still, mostly, "eyewash" (in Harry Truman's phrase). The last big change in the rules of the game had occurred about three decades earlier, when the Democrats got rid of the two-thirds rule in their national convention. It still made sense to dredge up colorful quotations from Moisei Ostrogorski and Frank Kent, who had written with insight about campaign politics at the turn of the century.

In the intervening dozen or so years, the face of American politics has been remade. Primaries have come to dominate the delegate-selection process; there is public financing of elections; the mass media are far more active in covering—and influencing—earlier and earlier phases of the process; national conventions, despite efforts to resuscitate them by rewriting party rules, have become nearly moribund as decision-making bodies; the power of party organizations and leaders has been greatly reduced. With the establishment of a network of federal rules and a Federal Election Commission, presidential nomination politics has become a nationally regulated industry, and the balance between state parties and the national parties has for the first time in our history tipped decisively toward the center.

All these changes, along with their precursors and consequences, add up to a revolution in the presidential selection process. Figuring out what it means is an intensely interesting exercise, and the newness of it all certainly justifies the rising tide of books on the subject. Sooner or later, no doubt, somebody will paint a sufficiently compelling portrait of the emerging process—as Theodore H. White did in 1960 for the earlier situation—to establish a new, if temporary, conventional wisdom. In the meantime, more and more chroniclers are trying their hand.

Richard Reeves, a political writer whose work has appeared in the New York *Times* and *New York* magazine, does not describe the considerations that shaped his decision to assemble a team of reporters and participant observers to cover the 1976 Democratic national convention, but it is not hard to invent a rationale for what he did. The Democrats had rewritten their rules so as to provide for split delegations to the convention and to encourage multiple candidacies. There was no incumbent Democrat in the White House, and, early on, no obvious front runner. So the chances were moderately good that for the first time in a long time a convention would be the locus of some real politicking and hence repay intensive study. The Democrats are always quite a lot of fun anyway, and as America's majority party, could be expected either to nominate a winner or to commit suicide in some colorful fashion. Since a convention is a multi-ring circus, defeating the best efforts of the most energetic single reporter, the idea of enlisting a number of collaborators made sense, opening up the possibility of a narrative that would reconstruct events from a number of different angles, Rashomon-style.

These intelligently laid plans went mostly for nought when Jimmy Carter and the mass media short-circuited the process and wrapped up the nomination ahead of the convention. It was the *Republican* convention of 1976 that turned out to be the more politically exciting, even given an incumbent President seeking to keep his job. Stuck with a substantial investment in a story that never quite materialized, Reeves has nevertheless managed to put together a pastiche of vignettes that captures some of the human interest of the Democratic party and some of the theatrics of politics. Thus, we read about what happened when an usher tried to persuade Mrs. Robert Wagner to take a back seat; and when a phalanx of Alabama state troopers, moving Governor George Wallace through a crowd, almost smashed Jacqueline Onassis against a wall; and when state Senator Manfred Ohrenstein of New York tried to get more tickets to the convention than Robert Strauss thought he deserved. We learn that it costs $40 to change a light bulb in Madison Square Garden, and that the entire building has only four drinking fountains, none of them accessible to the public. We also learn that New York was chosen as the convention city more or less by default, after Governor Jerry Brown of California (described here by a number of his senior colleagues in the party as "that little bastard," or worse) offended the site-selection committee of the Democratic party by suggesting that delegates sleep in church basements rather than hotel rooms.

Readers who share Reeves's view that politics is best understood as a mosaic of small incidents will enjoy *Convention,* and will admire the skill with which he has em-

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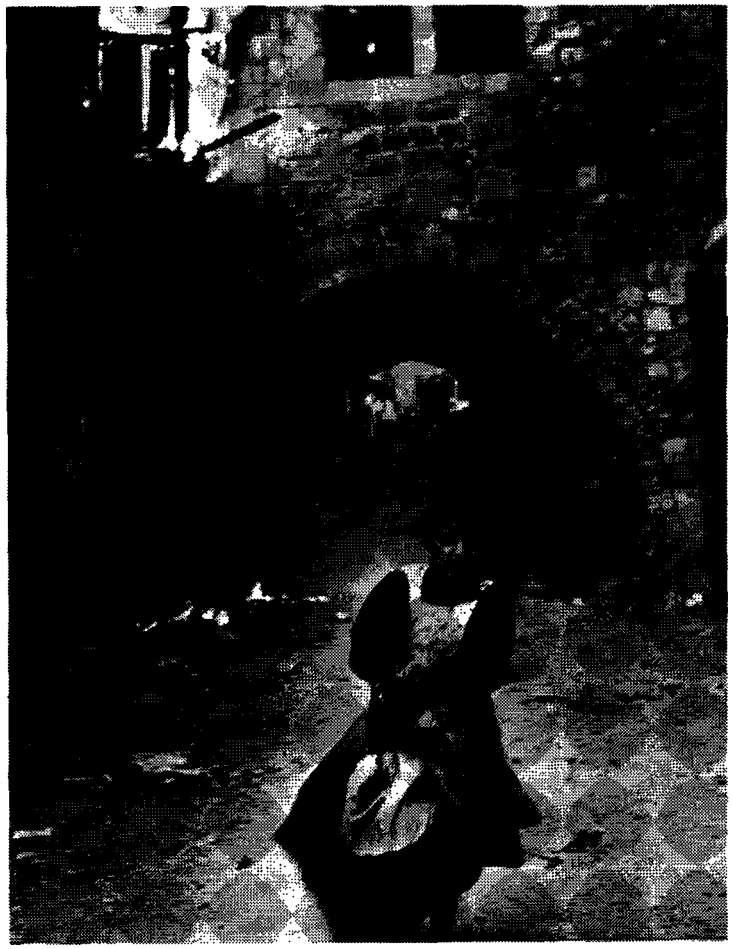

ISRAEL. THIRTY YEARS THAT HAVE CHANGED THE FACES OF TERROR INTO THE FACES OF HOPE.

In 1948 John Phillips, wearing an Arab Legion uniform, photographed the surrender and fiery sack of Jewish Jerusalem for Life Magazine. Three wars later, he returned to Israel for a seemingly impossible task: to seek out, photograph and interview the nameless people whose agony he had recorded nearly thirty years before. Amazingly, he located fifty survivors. Their stories are a composite of Israel's history and dreams. Their portraits, then and now, are Israel's Family of Man.

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braced the minuscule, the comic, and the routine when events conspired to deprive his vantage point of the grand vistas and heroic moments with which political reporters generally like to fill their books. Since most of his stories are trivial, the issue of whether they are true or not—and some may well not be—on the whole does not arise; it suffices that they are well told.

JULES WITCOVER's is a more ambitious, less relaxed book that undertakes to describe the main events of the entire presidential election season in rough chronological order and discuss the strategic calculations of the major politicians—the whole lightly mixed with Witcover's own commentary. This is, of course, more or less the Theodore White formula, and Witcover, a well-known political journalist, executes it with enormous diligence. His prose is more staid and workmanlike than White's, making copious use of the passive voice and of constructions like "the people seemed to be saying" and "somehow, it was believed." There are no Oscar Hammerstein lyrics extolling the romance of politics, no purple moments of sports-page hyperbole such as White occasionally provides. Some readers will find this a relief; others will get bored slogging through Witcover's recapitulation of the 1976 campaign, as seen from the perspective of an indefatigable infantryman of journalism.

Quite sensibly seeking to turn the sheer length of his story to account, Witcover at appropriate places proposes a theory that the mediocre record of voting participation which Americans have lately compiled is somehow related to the enervating prolongation of the election campaign. Unfortunately, Witcover presses rather than pursues this point. I know of no real evidence that presidential campaigns turn more people off than on; if anything, campaigns tend to activate people who are ordinarily marginally attentive to politics. The recent reforms, which Witcover evidently approves of—reforms that have cut back on the amount of money available for campaigning—may well have actually contributed to the problem by reducing the volume of candidate-generated publicity about the upcoming election and starving local voluntary efforts.

Witcover's taste for the encyclopedic contrasts with Reeves's fondness for the chaotic to produce some variation in the two men's descriptions of what happened in the campaign. Witcover, citing a lengthy interview with Hamilton Jordan, says that Jimmy Carter's strategy was from the start a "run everywhere" plan, and he identifies it (erroneously, I think) as "the same one that Muskie had used in 1972, and that had helped to bring him down." Reeves, on the other hand, writes:

> The strategy was to show well in the Iowa precinct caucuses . . . to stimulate press interest in Carter, and then spend as much money as could be raised and borrowed . . . to win the New Hampshire and Florida primaries. Despite innumerable reports of Carter master plans and organizational genius, there was no plan and precious little organization after the Florida vote on March 9.

I have no infallible method for reconciling these two accounts, except to say that on the whole I think that Reeves has in general written a more credible book. Witcover is selectively opinionated in annoying little ways, frequently reflecting a bias in favor of nothing more elevating than the convenience of journalists. Thus, a major basis for his defense of the emphasis our system places on the New Hampshire primary is that the state is "manageable" for "veteran political reporters." Out of this unpromising soil grows a hymn of praise to the typicality of the state and its electorate, "whose roots are so deeply entrenched in the early history of the nation." This is a peculiar description of the heavily French Canadian voting population in New Hampshire's Democratic primary, and it hardly does justice to the unique influence of the Manchester *Union Leader*, one of the few newspapers anywhere to blanket an entire state with what may gently be described as idiosyncratic news coverage.

Witcover's lapses of judgment are not frequent in a very long book, but they do occur with sufficient regularity, along with patches of labored and incoherent writing, to suggest that *Marathon* was put into print a little hastily, not only ahead of the competition but also before sober second thought could ripen some of his opinions. In their more spontaneous form, however, these opinions give an alert reader useful guidance to attitudes that are widely shared among political journalists, and hence they have documentary value quite apart from the issue of their plausibility or cogency.

It is, for example, useful to know that Witcover regards President Ford's wooing of convention delegates from the White House as "demeaning," as "relentless pandering," and as a series of "indignities." His view is that the business of the press is to hold the feet of aspiring politicians to the fire, and consequently an "adversary relationship" between the two camps is inevitable. This, however, does not prevent Witcover from praising politicians who break out of the "adversary" mold in order to do favors for journalists (so that the latter can get "scoops"), even though he is quite severe with those, such as "Nixon and his communications henchmen," who are "ruthlessly effective" at keeping the press at bay. President Ford is criticized for adopting the strategy of campaigning from the White House where he could protect himself from pugnacious coverage, but Witcover praises the media for doing their best to "minimize" the effect of his incumbency on voters. It appears, in short, that what Witcover has in mind as a suitable "adversary relationship" is a highly opinionated and self-righteous press corps arrayed against supine or compliant politicians.

"OVER the last four years," Witcover opines, "America hungered for somebody new, and honest, in government." This, apparently, is Witcover's warrant for dismissing George McGovern, Edmund Muskie, and Hubert Humphrey as "a hapless trio of burned-out national

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power-seekers," for viewing Terry Sanford as "a voice out of the past in a year in which voters seemed to be looking for new voices," and for judging that Morris Udall "somehow failed to transmit certainty about where he was going." It is a time-honored custom among American political journalists to become cheerleaders for winners and to heap scorn upon losers in electoral politics. Later, of course, reporters regain their franchise for "objectivity" by making a ritual feast upon the carcasses of incumbents of high office. There is room, in my opinion, for political analysis that does less of this, that glorifies less and denigrates less, and treats politicians as the ordinary human beings they so frequently are. But this would require some changes in the ground rules of American political journalism, probably in a direction in some respects suggested by Reeves, and away from the tradition exemplified by Witcover.

The Rule of Rome

THE GRAND STRATEGY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE: FROM THE FIRST CENTURY A.D. TO THE THIRD. By EDWARD N. LUTTWAK. *Johns Hopkins. 255 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by BERNARD BRODIE

A FRIEND of mine amused himself in his last years by collecting various people's reasons for the fall of Rome. His sources were mostly the orations of politicians, usually conservative ones, and the supply was surprisingly copious. One of our more recent Presidents to deliver himself of an opinion on the subject was Richard M. Nixon, who, perhaps predictably, found his reason in the decline of character among the Romans. This particular offering, neither original nor distinctive, was far from preempting the field; all sorts of reasons have been given, depending mostly on

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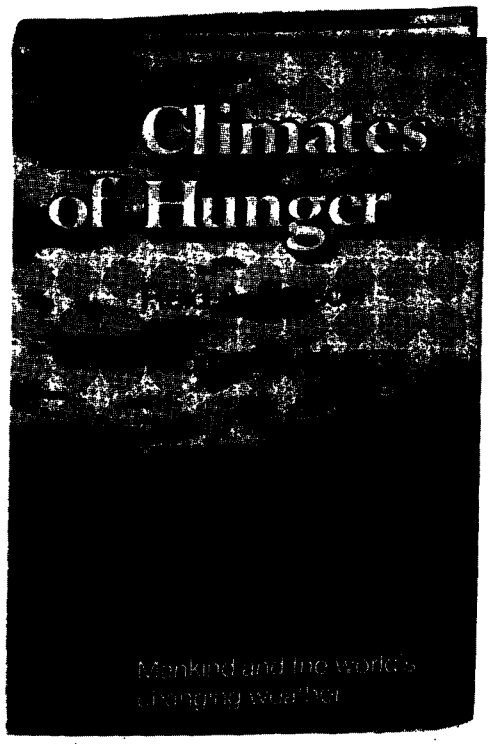

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what the speaker is intent on denouncing at the moment.

The preoccupation with the decline and fall of Rome, which in Gibbon's contribution constitutes one of the great monuments in the English language of the historian's art, springs no doubt from anxiety. This great historical catastrophe seems to underline the fact that no nation or civilization is guaranteed ultimate survival. Rome today is called the Eternal City, but the empire which it ruled was conspicuously not eternal, and for that matter the city itself was for a fairly long period very nearly extinct.

No comparable anxiety attends consideration of the rise and prolonged life of the Roman empire—hence there are fewer encapsulated reasons to account for it. There is, however, a vast array of historical works on Imperial Rome, and many of these works describe military operations, thus providing rich source material for whomever may have wished to produce the kind of systematic account that we have in the present book of the strategy by which this vast empire was held together for so long. It has taken too long for such a book to appear, a tardiness that reflects the general lack of interest in strategy among scholars.

The author of this new and excellent account is Edward N. Luttwak, which may come as something of a surprise to those who have some acquaintance with his other writings (including some in this magazine) on issues of modern strategy and armaments. An adviser to James R. Schlesinger when the latter was Secretary of Defense in the Nixon-Ford administrations, Luttwak has an extraordinary knowledge of contemporary armaments and their tactical and strategic significance. He is conspicuously brilliant, and also inclined to hold stubbornly to his strong and often unorthodox opinions. In this era, when so many well-known civilian strategists are utterly ignorant of military history—a phenomenon that would have bewildered and dismayed Clausewitz and other classic writers on strategy—it is refreshing to find one who can produce a top-grade scholarly work in military history, and astonishing to find that it deals not with the last century or two but with antiquity.

J. F. Gilliam, in a foreword, speaks of Luttwak's book as covering four centuries, which is literally correct if one takes into account some comments contained in the epilogue, but the author's own subtitle to the book states more accurately the period covered. It is roughly from the time of Augustus, under whom the expansion of the empire was essentially completed (except for the conquest of Britannia under Claudius), until the onset of inexorable decline in the middle of the 3rd century C.E. It is thus the period of the Roman empire at its height.

THE two most remarkable aspects of that empire which together raise the question that this book sets out to answer are, first, its enormous expanse, especially in view of the extremely slow communications and transportation of the time, and second, its long duration. Both border on the unbelievable.

The simplest of Western peoples know something of the grandeur of Rome from the legends of their several religions. The Jews of Israel have made a highly symbolic monument of the mountain fortress of Masada, from the heights of which one can still see the outlines of the Roman encampments below, and Christians of all sects have reason enough to know that Rome ruled in Jerusalem when Christ was there. The modern traveler who knocks about Europe and the Mediterranean littoral is in the most far-flung places caught up with wonderment at visible, frequently well-preserved, and sometimes unexpected evidence that here where he stands the Romans have also been, and clearly stayed for some time. For the Roman empire endured not just for one or two generations, but for many.

How is this to be explained? One must look not for the genius of one man or even of many men, but for the selective development of sound institutions which could endure and prevail in the midst of all kinds of upheavals at home. Certainly the empire was not founded upon any special genius for government dis-

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played by the Roman people as compared with other literate peoples of the time, like the Greeks. For long periods when the empire was at its strongest, the office of the emperor was regularly vacated by murder and then filled through a show of force impelled by bribery. Statistically speaking, the vocation of emperor during those times was not much less hazardous than that of gladiator. One might read into all this a certain vigor, the attenuation of which would no doubt figure among the reasons catalogued by my late friend for Rome's decline and fall. Nevertheless, during such periods the primary preoccupation of the man at the topmost place of power must have been with keeping himself there, which meant keeping himself alive.

One surmises that the maintenance of the empire was pretty much the accomplishment of a fairly detached and probably self-perpetuating bureaucracy. Luttwak does not enlighten us very much on this matter, but concentrates rather on the military mechanisms manipulated by whichever government structure was responsible for the manipulating. Although he distinguishes three different periods, each with a particular pattern, certain factors were common to all three.

FOR MOST of the time-span Luttwak covers, the whole empire was defended by an astonishingly small number of men, about 300,000 to 350,000 distributed among some twenty-five to thirty legions. Thus, the basic theme for the success of the system lay in the economizing of forces. Because of the very slow modes of movement in those days, whether by land or by sea, it would have been futile to keep any significant portion of those forces as a strategic reserve within Italy. On the other hand, a perimeter defense is always a brittle one. The Romans adopted a compromise system. Legions were allocated to specific border regions on a fairly permanent basis; those legions were near the perimeter, but were nevertheless *maintained as masses of maneuver.*

Complementary to the legions were the native forces of the client states just outside the empire. Client states did not pay taxes to Rome, and they derived a certain prestige from their connection. Also, they were guaranteed support from nearby legions if they undertook to resist intrusions from the barbarians outside. By the same token they could fear a dread punishment if they did not comport themselves appropriately. An essential part of the system was the certainty of punishment, both inside the empire and without, for attack or rebellion. As Luttwak points out in his introduction: "The lesson of Masada [which the Romans besieged for three years] was that the Romans would pursue rebellion even to mountain tops in remote deserts to destroy its last vestiges, regardless of cost."

THIS is naturally the barest outline of the book's plan, which the author develops with outstanding skill, learning, and insight. The treatment gives one always the feeling of commendable conciseness, for Luttwak uses words as sparingly as the Romans used their legions. There is, however, one serious flaw in the book: there are essentially no people in it. True, one sees the names of many emperors, but they are brought in simply as labels for time periods.

There are two serious consequences of this flaw. First, though the book is well-written and moves along at a good pace, it lacks a certain liveliness that it might otherwise have had, the kind of liveliness that would truly attract one to the reading of it. Second, since the technology of the time is so different from ours and the time itself so remote, anyone interested in this military history because of its possible relevance to the present will keenly miss the one element that might have made for relevance —the conduct of men under stress, especially the stress of war.

Still, this is a work well done and long needed. Can we find in it still

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another reason for the fall of Rome? The message seems to be that we should look outside of Rome rather than inside. Among other things, being a colony of Rome or a client state gradually declined in status. As Luttwak puts it, "The cultural and economic influence of Rome on the lives of all [its] neighbors . . . itself created a cultural and political basis for common action against it."

The Revised Hitler

HITLER'S WAR. By DAVID IRVING. *Viking. 926 pp. $17.50.*

THE PSYCHOPATHIC GOD: ADOLF HITLER. By ROBERT G. L. WAITE. *Basic Books. 482 pp. $13.50.*

Reviewed by LEONARD BUSHKOFF

THE Hitler boom continues unabated, but the man remains as elusive a subject for revisionists and psychohistorians as ever he was to more conventional biographers. Among the first in the recent crop was John Lukacs's *The Last European War* (1976), a brilliant (and perverse) extended essay that echoes the French rightists of the 1930's. Like them, Lukacs regards Europe in that era as requiring a moral laxative, which Hitler was best qualified to administer; once purged, a resurgent, German-led continent would have been able to withstand both Russian Communism and American materialism. Next came John Toland's *Adolf Hitler*, whose author, functioning like a rookie reporter at the Borgia court, ladles on the human interest by portraying a personable, kindly Hitler who, for some unaccountable reason, chose to conquer Europe and massacre millions.

In both books there is a common denominator: revisionism, the systematic search for a positive side to Hitler. What Lukacs and Toland merely imply becomes explicit in David Irving's *Hitler's War*, where all restraint is abandoned and Hitler is virtually canonized. It is no longer a matter of benevolence or generosity, or of regrets that Hitler's greatness as an anti-Communist crusader was undercut by such excesses as the Holocaust. Irving writes as a zealot, a true believer, and the spirit of his work is closer to theology (or mythology) than to history.

All the more reason for *Hitler's War* to sail under scholarly colors, and for Irving's claim to have used new documents and data in constructing his case. In this there is no doubt some truth. Unlike Toland, Irving is fluent in German, and his earlier books—on various technological and intelligence aspects of the German war machine—have familiarized him with the background, and also with those in Germany who can, if they wish, present fresh material on the Third Reich.

But Irving handles these documentary nuggets in his seventy pages of notes as though they were state secrets. The diaries on which he leans so heavily are hardly described; nor are page or date citations always given; and the file numbers of other documents have a curiously abbreviated quality. This is equally true of the bibliography, which lists many minor, tangential works, but excludes others of direct importance. The general effect is that of a wary entrepreneur who, having completed a new building of revolutionary construction, employing untested materials and designed by an untried architect, refuses to allow prospective buyers to inspect the blueprints or probe the foundations: his accomplishments must be accepted on faith alone.

This would come more easily if Irving himself had any faith in previous writers about Hitler. Instead, he denounces them for every conceivable intellectual crime: sloth, plagiarism, bearing false witness, defamation of character, tampering with evidence, etc. And he asserts proudly that he relies only on pure, undoctored documents—"I eschewed as far as possible all *published* literature"—thus excusing himself from the burden of further research.

The essential, virtually the *only* figure in this book is Hitler, "the central powerhouse, coordinating and commanding, that alone seemed to enable Germany to withstand the onslaught of the whole world. . . ." It opens in Hitler's special train on September 3, 1939; it closes with the very moment of his suicide on April 30, 1945. He appears on every page, directing, exhorting, appraising, calculating, innovating, and also joking, chatting, eating, sleeping, even dreaming. We are taken into his headquarters, permitted to perch on his shoulder, encouraged to watch his every move. And all this with a richness of detail obviously intended to convince a television-age audience of the solidity of Irving's claim to know virtually *everything*, great and small, about the Fuehrer.

WHAT Irving does not know, despite his stance as the honest chronicler, recording events and summarizing documents, is the difference between myth and reality. The same arguments by which Hitler rationalized his actions are here repeated, polished, and amplified. Thus, the war was begun to right the wrongs of Versailles by restoring Danzig and the Polish Corridor to Germany. The Poles, moreover, were "Asian" brutes whose atrocities and backwardness entirely justified harsh treatment. Hitler sincerely sought peace with Britain, but "the Churchill clique" refused, and was backed by a Roosevelt who nevertheless was eager to despoil the British empire; the Duke of Windsor alone represented reasonable Britons. Churchill—Irving's argument goes on—had not hesitated earlier to embroil Scandinavia in the war; now he ordered the atrocious bombing of German civilians. But Hitler refused to be diverted from his true mission, the destruction of Bolshevism. This was no personal whim, but an absolute necessity, for Stalin was preparing to pounce. The Bolsheviks too were cruel and devious; they too deserved what they got. Had Hitler conquered, there would have been no cold war; should we not have applauded him? And had Britain accepted him as an ally, would not the British empire—whose world mission Hitler of course accepted—be standing even now?

But Hitler failed, and this requires an explanation. The immensity of Allied resources Irving

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LEONARD BUSHKOFF *reviews widely in modern history and is currently writing a book on the outbreak of the Pacific war in 1941.*

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largely ignores; he is even less interested in material factors than was Hitler. The Russian winter, inevitably, is invoked, as is the alleged spitefulness of Roosevelt and especially of Churchill. The worst enemy, however, lay within, among Hitler's allies and subordinates, Goering, Speer, Pétain, Horthy, Mussolini, certainly Franco: all were self-centered, jealous, pursuing personal goals while the deluge neared. This too explains the Final Solution, slipped over by Himmler and Heydrich while Hitler's back was turned. Worse still were the generals, those smug aristocrats, lying, disobeying Hitler's orders, conspiring at assassination attempts, and sponsoring defeatism, or worse, on the battlefield. Witness so many otherwise inexplicable defeats (for Hitler's strategic insights were remarkable), the constant failures of German intelligence, and the machinations of the Free Germany Committee in Moscow: treason underlay them all.

The "stab-in-the-back" legend is a familiar refrain, trumpeted by the German generals in 1919 to excuse their defeat in World War I. Now Irving, following Hitler's later ravings, has turned history on its head by using it against the military. Hitler would no doubt not object to having his overall interpretation of the war thus asserted anew, but it is difficult to understand who else will benefit, or why the effort was made at all. Writers, like boxers and actors, have occupational hazards, of which the emotional entanglement of the biographer with his subject is surely not the least.

THIS issue does not arise in Robert Waite's psychobiography, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler*. Waite is fascinated, but also horrified, as he attempts to explain the essence of "the Hitler phenomenon," that complex of interlocking questions which have baffled scholars for years. What conditions molded the young Adolf, an unknown, alienated outsider, into the Fuehrer, a would-be world conquerer? And how was such a forceful synthesis achieved between his drives and those of the Germans whom Hitler once addressed as follows: "That is the miracle of our times: that you found me—that you found me among so many millions! And that I found you is Germany's fortune."

It is not on Hitler the politician or strategist that Waite focuses, nor on Hitler in Vienna or in the trenches, but rather on the infant in Braunau and the youth in Linz. With Freud and Erik Erikson as his mentors, Waite is disposed to treat those early years as formative, even decisive. It was then, he contends, that Hitler, fearing that his paternal grandfather had been Jewish, sought to compensate, to erase all doubts, by himself moving toward anti-Semitism. It was then that Hitler's bohemianism, his personal quirkiness, his ambivalence regarding authority, were fostered by clashes with a rigid, domineering bureaucrat of a father. It was then that Hitler—presumably—witnessed sexual intercourse between his parents and was grievously afflicted by this "primal scene trauma." This, and his excessively close relations with his young mother, nurtured an Oedipus complex, and the self-hatred that accompanied the—inevitable—incestuous fantasies.

Nor is this all. Drawing on a Russian autopsy in 1945 of a half-burned body later identified as Hitler's, and rejecting opposing arguments by some of Hitler's doctors, Waite insists that the German dictator had only one testicle. An awareness of his deficiency could only have intensified a self-hatred virtually identical with masochism, and this, Waite asserts, found expression through coprophilia, a perverted sexual involvement with defecation and urination.

THESE revelations of Waite's are rooted less in evidence than in inference, supposition, hypothesis, extrapolation from various sources (some quite dubious), and deductions based on comparisons between Hitler and other individuals displaying similar outward behavior. Anality, coprophilia, sadomasochism, physical deficiencies, the Oedipus complex: these are not defined, nor is their particular applicability to Hitler explained; they are treated as self-evident truths, part of any person's normal intellectual baggage. All this rings of the early 1940's, when the absence of reliable documentary material encouraged the application of psychoanalytical theory—or at least jargon—to Hitler, and when his alleged carpet chewing, foaming at the mouth, and bizarre sexual behavior were taken as somehow explaining his career. The coprophilic theme was in fact advanced by Walter Langer and others in 1943, in an internal OSS appraisal that was published in 1972 with Waite's enthusiastic comments. The total effect was, and is, to sensationalize and trivialize Hitler, and to provide a distraction from what is, after all, the vital issue: Hitler as a man of *power*.

Waite's Hitler is a pitiful, kinky character more likely to be found in a pornography shop or a seedy rooming house than at supreme headquarters. How could *this* Hitler possibly have come to power? Waite's answer (aside from stock phrases about the "demonic," "charismatic," and "hypnotic" Hitler) is to bring in Luther and Bismarck, Hegel and Nietzsche, the *Freikorps* and the Nazi youth movement, and indeed every authoritarian and anti-Semitic episode in German history, the better to label the Germans a psychotic people who were virtually destined for Hitler's embrace. This too rings of the 1940's: a morally sick nation meeting its morally sick leader, and the two setting off together into a destructive future. Recycling may make ecological sense, but the use of psychobiography to recycle outworn ideas merely perpetuates notions that deserve speedy burial.

The Dishonest Decade

THE AUDEN GENERATION: LITERATURE AND POLITICS IN ENGLAND IN THE 1930's. By SAMUEL HYNES. *Viking. 394 pp. $12.50.*

Reviewed by RONALD BERMAN

W. H. AUDEN wrote of the 30's —and of his own participation in them—that it was a low, dis-

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RONALD BERMAN, *who until recently was chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, is the author of* America in the 60's: An Intellectual History.

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honest decade. George Orwell thought that the 30's began with the hangover of World War I, and ended with crazy oppositions leading to World War II: "Communists waving Union Jacks, Conservative MP's cheering the news that British ships have been bombed, the Pope blessing Franco, Anglican dignitaries beaming at the wrecked churches of Barcelona." Robert Graves did not think much better of the subject; *The Auden Generation* does, and it has some points to make and lose. It confines itself to a small and, I think, unrepresentative group of fairly privileged people. They were bourgeois, literary, and homosexual; radicals of a sort; and the book's analysis sometimes seems wasted on their preciosity. Aside from Auden, they wrote little that now seems to matter or that, compared to others like Orwell, mattered at the time. *The Auden Generation* is thus about one of those many historical movements in politics and culture that never went anywhere. But the book is stronger than its subject, and offers what is probably one of the best available literary studies of radical poetry and criticism. And it is a very useful study of the regnant ideas of the cultural Left.

Most of the figures under discussion went to Oxford, and all seemed to have enough money not to work. Orwell thought of them as wealthy schoolboys who had abandoned the "tragic sense of life" of the 20's for a more revolutionary sense of "serious purpose" that remained (despite their efforts) self-ascribed. The seriousness of that purpose was attained through Communism or, more precisely, through the anti-fascism that remained a touchstone of intellectual life at that time. C. Day Lewis, Christopher Caudwell, Christopher Isherwood, Stephen Spender, Charles Madge, Michael Roberts, and Auden himself (at least until the middle of the decade) saw themselves as writers dedicated to a cause greater than writing. Because of this they were self-critical, not to say self-destructive, about the disparity between what they could do and what they believed necessary. One of the best and saddest parts of the book is the section on Marxist cultural criticism, with its unrelenting demand for orthodoxy in art. It was this, among other things, that drove Auden into a different kind of conceptual world. His poetry refused to be sublimated, and "made nothing happen."

As EARLY as 1934 the arts had become part of the agenda for the British Communist party. There was a great inquisitorial effort that took many shapes: in reviews, admonishments, public debate, through editorials and even the choices of book clubs. The *Left Review* methodically took up every competing form of art or ideology: it disliked Surrealism, for example, although Surrealists made a heroic effort to prove that their work was "naturally" Marxian. It rebuked not only those on the Right, but those insufficiently on the Left, including Auden and Isherwood. One useful exercise performed by *The Auden Generation* is the excavation of this state of mind. What we think of as the lasting works of the decade—poems and plays by Rex Warner, Isherwood, Auden, and Day Lewis—had to run the gauntlet when they first appeared. They were praised and blamed and censored to the degree that any ambiguity native to historical judgment or life had been choked into political conformity. Which is to say that writers were often lambasted and invited to recant, as Spender did.

Yet critical independence took unexpected forms. Travel books, which were a good, minor form of 30's literature, and which may have outlasted work with more "serious" intentions, had social as well as personal connotations. The Auden group was highly mobile, and it used its cultivated freedom from tradition to examine Europe (and other places, the more remote the better) in new and, I think, highly intelligent ways. A social geography was created by Spender's Vienna, Isherwood's Berlin, the London of Auden and that of Graham Greene, even Iceland in the poems and letters of Auden and Louis MacNeice, and, superabundantly, by the moralized landscape of Spain during the civil war. These books are to some extent spiritual journeys

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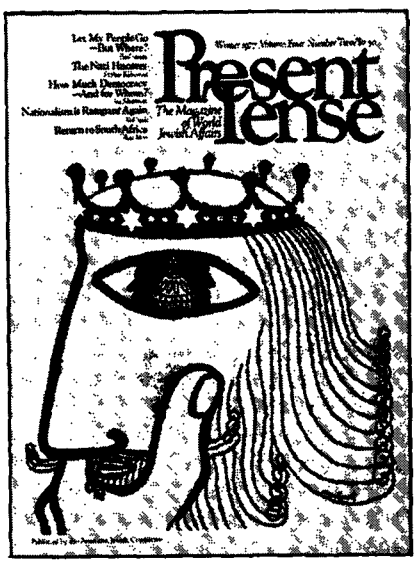

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On renewed interest in Judaica among young Americans: "The young people perceived themselves as survivors of the failures of Jewish education and the false values of America." Sylvia Rothchild, Summer '75.

On Israel's Nature Reserves: "It may be that General Yoffe's animals will somehow lead the people of the Middle East to peace one day. But the tanks were in the mountains, waiting. The real beast in the desert was still man." Robert Spero, Summer '76.

On being a Jewish poet: "The truest Jewish poetry will be written out of the inward preoccupations of people who happen to be Jews." M. L. Rosenthal, Winter '76.

On the Persian Gulf arms race: "The ramifications of what is happening... extend from the Caspian Sea to the Suez Canal and from the African Coast to Pakistan." Tad Szulc, Spring '75.

On Israel's Arab intellectuals: "I am an Israeli but I cannot be a Jew." Naomi Shepherd, Spring '75.

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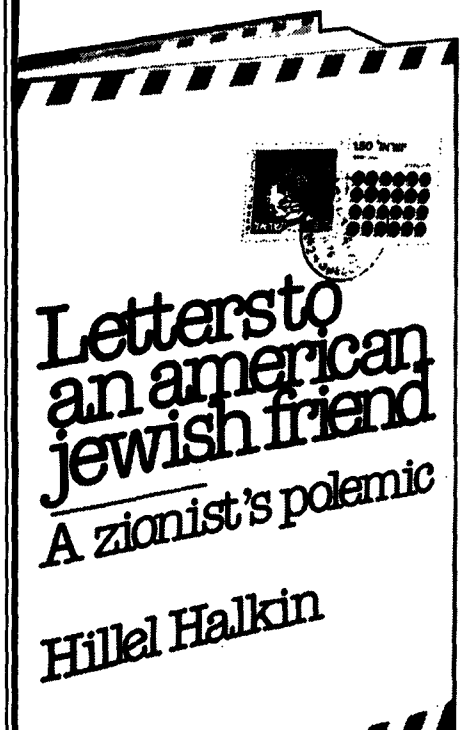
which allow for the kind of distancing ordinarily prevented by the formulas of ideology. Hynes calls them "parabolic" forms because reportage, which seems simple, can be a symbolic act of assertion. The *literalness* of these books says something about the difference between the organizing power of political consciousness and the free play of the mind. To be a "camera," as one of the great metaphors of the decade implied, was to restore the balance between politics and culture.

Hynes's characterization of these works seems to me fairly realistic as a critical judgment. The output of books about places, in a decade of ideas, does in fact seem parabolic. And our familiarity with the works of others outside the Auden generation—Graves, Waugh, and D.H. Lawrence—leads to another recognition, that personal experience and historical knowledge were associated with "travel" in the same way they had been in Swift and Voltaire. Greene thought of Africa as a *Journey Without Maps*, which is to say as an exposition and discovery of things as they are, without the false categories of applied political interpretation. Orwell disliked this genre and disparaged it in "Inside the Whale," but I think he was wrong.

In a book full of detail and thesis there are yet some things absent from *The Auden Generation*. It is about political writing, but it does not have an adequate sense of intellectual history. Its characters seem to respond instantaneously to events: a bad year in Germany leads to that much more Communist conversion and anxiety among the intellectuals of the West. But these intellectuals probably were more complex than is suggested by the catalogue of their writings, arguments, and reviews. *The Auden Generation* has none of the concrete power of Auden's poetry. It does not seem to grasp the complexities of personal association and family, and it views all things schematically and without reference to appetites normally indulged and then evaluated by biography. It has a great deal to say about the disheartening effects of World War I, but very much needs the intervention of Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* for a sense of particulars. Its allusions to the immediate past of its own present are textbook allusions. And it suffers from comparison even with some fairly pedestrian material on the life of Auden. For example, Stephen Spender's tribute, *W. H. Auden*, is full of information on those years: on the prejudices, eccentricities, relationships amorous, friendly, moral, or immoral, which dominated the life of the central figure of the generation. But none of this has survived Hynes's orientation. *The Auden Generation*, which describes itself as a study of literature and politics in England in the 30's, confines itself to a few people in a delimited way. It is dismissive of Orwell, Cyril Connolly, and others who were outside the group. William Empson is well handled but F. R. Leavis is barely in the index.

Auden's disciples were very reactive, and did more thinking about the politics of culture than was really enabling. Their attitude was emotionally hesitant, revealed in countless invocations about the difficulty of writing and thinking. Neither is really that hard. MacNeice wrote in 1932 that the new group had revived "the Greek preference for information or statement. The first requirement is to have something to say, and after that you must say it as well as you can." Toward the end of the decade he changed his mind:

"...a book any Jew concerned with Israel and the future of the Jewish people ought to read."*



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It is going, going among the
flux of words,
Three thousand years of a wordy
civilization.

Much of the stuff of this period, and of this group, was tactically rhetorical; organized around the problem of adequate statement. I do not think this generation—with the tremendous exception of its leader—had a language for its feelings. They claimed to, just as they claimed to have a "serious purpose." But their writing is about the difficulty of writing, and it sees both culture and politics as alien regimes. If they had had something to say, they would have said it.

Failed Socialism

THE FUTURE THAT DOESN'T WORK: SOCIAL DEMOCRACY'S FAILURES IN BRITAIN. Edited by R. EMMETT TYRRELL. *Doubleday. 208 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL NOVAK

MANY liberals today have an uneasy conscience about socialism, which as an ideal once seemed to be our best hope for overcoming the harshness of profiteering capitalism and cruel individualism. The present volume is especially useful at such a moment, when new questions have arisen about the historical program of social democracy. Three or four of its nine essays are memorable, and none is without merit. Together, they have the virtue of concentrating attention upon a single, recent national experience which, rather than constituting a model for America to follow, seems rather to offer an example to be avoided.

The first seven essays concentrate upon particulars of the British scene: the trade unions (Peregrine Worsthorne); health and medicine (Harry Schwartz); intellectuals (Colin Welch); crime and punishment (James Q. Wilson); the Conservative party (Patrick Cosgrave); economic tensions (Samuel Brittan); and welfare in the welfare state (Leslie Lenkowsky). The last two essays take larger views: Peter Jay's "Englanditis" and Irving Kristol's "Socialism: Obituary for an Idea."

"Alone among the leaders of contemporary Britain," Peregrine Worsthorne writes, union leaders, "and they alone, have a clear sense of their own value and an unshaken faith in their own function." Precisely because Great Britain has made non-revolutionary progress toward equality of opportunity, every step of upward success and status generates feelings of guilt among those who move out of their class. Union leaders, however, are not gentlemen and do not have to be; they are carried by the inmost legitimating current of the times. Hence the power they wield in British society, which is the power to bring industry to its knees, is unchecked by moral scruples, by *noblesse oblige*, or, in some cases, even by social conscience.

Harry Schwartz cites a series of staggering statistics about the condition of health care in England, and quotes David Owen, formerly the Labor minister in charge of the National Health Service (now Britain's Foreign Minister):

> The health service was launched on a fallacy. First we were going to finance everything, cure the nation, and then spending would drop. That fallacy has been exposed. Then there was the period when everybody thought the public could have whatever it needed on the health service—it was just a question of governmental will. Now we recognize that no country, even if they are prepared to pay the taxes, can supply everything.

The desire for health care is as deep as the hope for immortality. Who can supply it? Subject as it is to the immediacies of politics, the National Health Service (NHS) has skimped on long-range capital expenditures. The number of hospital beds per capita is down. Long lines, bureaucratic hassles, extremely ill persons on waiting lists, chronically short and inadequate services, exceedingly low morale among physicians, re-

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gional dislocations, severe impersonality, and deteriorating facilities make the NHS, even to the Labor government, appear very sick, indeed.

The essay by Colin Welch is an excellent study of those in Britain who think themselves to be moved primarily by their intellects, and make a living thereby, or else are influenced by those who do. "The fish," he begins, "decays from the head first." Most intellectuals in Britain stand "in our recent history predominantly on the Left." Borrowing from George Orwell, Welch spends considerable time on Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Harold Laski, John Strachey, R. H. Tawney, and Anthony Crosland, "because Britain is still governed by them, perhaps increasingly so." This essay is too rich to summarize. Some points: Intellectuals find it hard to understand the nature and role of incentives, competition, time and obsolescence, inflation, scarcity, and the free determination of wants. There are also the inverted snobbery of intellectuals, their envy and their class pretenses, and their disdain for the rationality of ordinary people. By misunderstanding how democracy and capitalism actually work in Great Britain, intellectuals helped to erect the "uniform tyranny" from which the country now suffers. *"Si monumentum requiris, circumspice,"* Welch concludes. If you seek their monument, come to Great Britain.

Space permits only a glance at the figures and observations lined up by Wilson, Cosgrave, Brittan, and Lenkowsky. James Q. Wilson documents the growing crime and unrest in Great Britain, a situation which has begun to resemble that in the U.S. to an unhappy degree. Patrick Cosgrave points out that there are tides in the life of nations and ideas, and in Great Britain since 1945 the Conservative party, short on ideas, has been reduced to digging in its heels against the outgoing Labor tide, while being inexorably pulled under. Samuel Brittan exposes brilliantly the "envious, self-defeating" attitudes which come to prevail in the political culture of democracies. The emphasis upon equality

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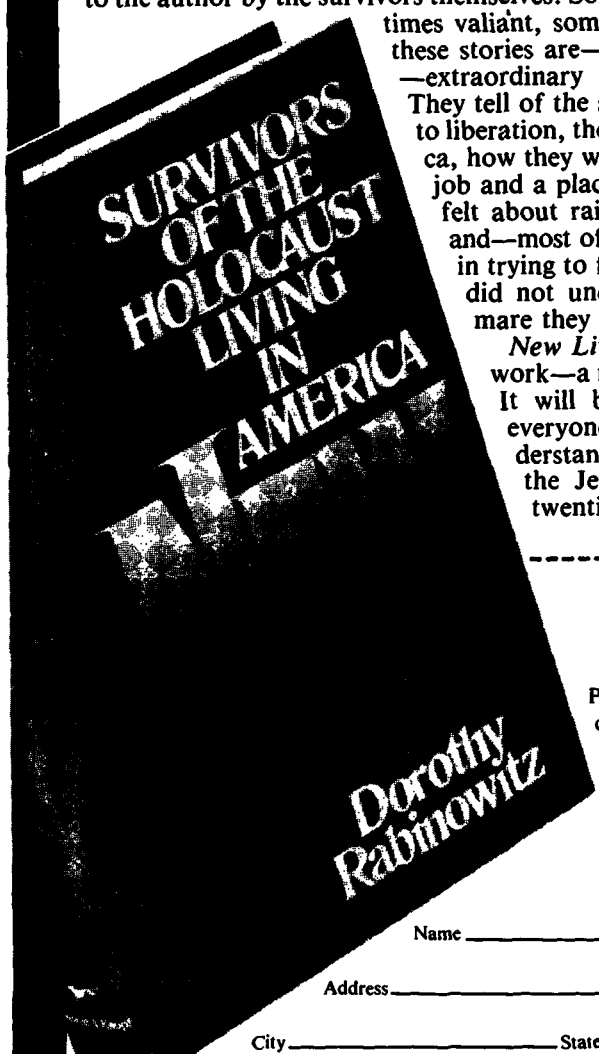

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causes each citizen to focus on "getting mine." (In one survey, 80 per cent of those questioned preferred an extra £4 a week in common with everyone else, to an extra £5 if everyone else's income were to rise by the still higher sum of £6.) The non-productive and the productive receive the same; progress dies. Leslie Lenkowsky concludes his chapter on welfare, statistically the most dense and difficult in the book, thus: "Precisely because the British attached great value to welfare programs, the nation has been a world leader in social policy. Because it continues to do so, Britain will remain less prosperous as well."

"We in Britain are a confused and unhappy people," Peter Jay begins his summary essay on "Englanditis." Jay (the new British ambassador to the U.S.) outlines clearly the inherent contradiction between the political marketplace and the economic marketplace. Through the coercive powers of government, many *can* get something for nothing: the political leader can promise "more"—for instance, full employment—to more people, but without being held to provide the economic means for achieving it. As for the people, they can vote their desires, but in the short term of the political leader's career, hard choices and decisions need never be imposed on them. Democracy, Jay concludes, is in grave danger of degenerating into fantasyland. If the critical task of democratic civilization is to combine a high degree of prosperity with a high degree of personal freedom, "Englanditis" consists in the lowering of both.

Irving Kristol's essay, which might have been called "The Twilight of Socialism," plays a nice counterpoint to all the "twilights of capitalism" that have been written over the past century. "Social democracy," Kristol writes, "gives every sign of being intellectually and morally bankrupt." The original sources of socialist dissent—"utopian" socialism—derived their spiritual energy from a profound dissatisfaction with modernity itself. "The essential point of this indictment was that *liberty was not enough*," because men need a "political community," of which the individual liberties of capitalism deprive them. Where capitalists like Adam Smith thought men could find their deeper values in private, socialists feared "the nihilism inherent in the bourgeois Protestant principle," feared that the ideal of the good life would become replaced by "life style," just one more commodity in the marketplace. No spiritual vision, no communal bond, only alienation.

Yet under the cover of "curing alienation" (as Christianity claimed to heal sin), "scientific" socialism has resulted mainly in the growth of state power, and new and more dangerous forms of alienation. "Mixed" socialism, as in Sweden, has demonstrated that organized labor and the state bureaucracy can receive an ever-increasing share of the national income and of political power. Britain is Sweden's future. And in Britain, "all objective indices of social pathology—crime, juvenile delinquency, corruption, ethnic dissent, emigration, etc.—show steady increases."

KRISTOL's is an important statement, yet there is something missing from it—and from this book. Plainly, the "idea" of socialism generates no historical verification of its claims; wherever it has been put into practice, it has failed to provide what it promises and in a significant number of cases it has exacerbated the disease for which it is supposed to be a remedy. Just as plainly, the idea continues to captivate and to ensnare. In a certain sense, socialism works even more powerfully as a religion (a mystification, one might say) the more it refuses to be translated into successful practice. The more it fails, the more it continues to win passionate adherents.

The idea of socialism provides, perhaps, the most effective contemporary vehicle of ancient Judeo-Christian ideals: the ideal of a meaningful, directed history, the ideal of charity, justice, and equality on earth as in heaven. It is perhaps the subtlest, and potentially the most destructive, Christian heresy to have emerged in two millennia. It inexorably conquers more and more regions of the world, and as one watches the shifts of real political power on this globe, one cannot help but sense that the "obituary" being prepared is not that of socialism, as Kristol suggests, but that of freedom.

Partisans of liberty have need of Cardinal Newman's advice, cited by Kristol, not yet taken: an erroneous idea can be expelled from the mind only by the active presence of another idea. Socialism gains, "Englanditis" spreads, for want of that idea.

Fund Raising

WHY THEY GIVE: AMERICAN JEWS AND THEIR PHILANTHROPIES. By MILTON GOLDIN. *Macmillan. 261 pp. $10.95.*

Reviewed by MARC LEE RAPHAEL

PHILANTHROPY in Judaism is not so much an individual as a collective project, and has become even more of one in recent American Jewish life. The federated Jewish philanthropies in this country, which have acquired greater and greater control over welfare, social-service, and Israel-related programs in the past decades, have also come to identify themselves as the chief public representatives of the Jewish community. Fund raising, the process by which financial resources are gathered for later disbursement, has become a key function of community organization, and successful Jewish men and women who also show a talent for soliciting funds are often accorded positions of honor within the ranks of the community's lay leadership.

Given the magnitude of the sums involved, this practice is not so surprising. Following the Yom Kippur War of 1973, for example, the Jews of Washington, D.C., alone purchased $4 million in Israel Bonds; during that same year the United Jewish Appeal collected $250 million from America's Jews. The figures in relatively small communities are no less staggering,

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especially when they are compared with the amounts raised citywide for general-purpose charities like the United Way. Thus, the Jews of Columbus, Ohio, a community of 16,000, raised $2.7 million in 1975 (an "off" year); in the same year, the United Way, drawing upon more than 900,000 persons, raised $7.2 million. While each Columbus resident contributed $8 to the United Way, each Columbus Jew averaged $169 to the United Jewish Appeal. It is no wonder, then, that the United Jewish Appeal has been called the "most successful nongovernmental money-raising organization in the world."

MILTON GOLDIN, himself a Jewish fund raiser, is fascinated by American Jewish philanthropy—more precisely, by American Jewish philanthropists, and more exactly still, by the "big givers of the Jewish establishment." Although his brief book largely ignores the question raised by its title—"*why* they give"—it does present a mass of information about a handful of wheeler-dealers in the fascinating world of American Jewish giving.

Part One surveys the three waves of Jewish immigration to America—Spanish (18th century), German (19th century), and East European (late 19th and early 20th centuries)—and portrays the philanthropic activities of Jews already settled here as they responded to the newcomers and to the new land. We meet Sephardic philanthropic heroes in New York, Savannah, Newport, and New Orleans; great *Yahudim* (German Jews) like Gimbel, Seligman, Guggenheim, Strauss, Kuhn, Loeb, Schiff, and Marshall; and prominent *Yidn* (East European Jews) of New York. Utilizing for the most part published biographies, Goldin moves in this section of the book from one rich Jew to the next.

In contrast to Part One, which proceeds by portrait and anecdote, the final three chapters present a panorama of Jewish philanthropic activity. Although Goldin is still interested almost exclusively in New York and its Jewish elite, we witness the responses of American Jewish leadership to the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, to the enormous despair among Europe's Jews in the period of World War I, to the anti-Semitism of the 1920's, to the Nazis, to the Zionist struggle in Palestine and the birth of Israel, and to the continuing dominance of Israeli needs up to the present. In these chapters Goldin draws largely on recent scholarly histories of American Jewish institutions and movements, as well as memoirs, and he tells an absorbing story, if one that may be somewhat confusing to the uninitiated.

THE faults of the book are many. Goldin's numerous anecdotes about the rich and his brief summaries of complex historical events are no substitute for the real data necessary to support his general statements. The opening chapters especially amount to a string of anachronistic generalizations and outright errors. Thus, "though big givers were rare" in the Colonial period, Goldin has them heading "fund-raising committees" and "tirelessly visiting prospective givers." All German Jews are called *Yahudim*, a term of negative connotation which grossly oversimplifies the complexities of German Jewish society, stereotyping the members of this elite as "tight-lipped, thrifty, Reform, prosperous, assimilated, affluent, and influential." The East European *shtetl*, on the other hand, is tediously romanticized à la *Life Is With People*. As for the portraits of the "big givers," each is little more than a caricature.

A true tale of America's Jews and their philanthropies this book, then, certainly is not—though by the time one has finished it, one has had his fill of the "Jewish 400," of card calling (a Jewish invention), of meetings to decide on the proper allocation of funds, of the competition between Israel Bonds and the United Jewish Appeal, of the path taken by a UJA dollar, and of the endless round of testimonial lunches and dinners that is the lot of big-money fund raisers.

What is missing from the book, first, is any attention to the world of fund raising as it actually operates and any analysis of the way it is organized. To what extent, for instance, does the control of multi-million-dollar budgets by a score of wealthy men parallel similar developments elsewhere in American corporate life? Does the voluntary nature of philanthropy make it inevitable that an individual contributor or group of contributors, strongly identified with a cause or an agency, will have a pervasive influence over community decisions affecting that cause or agency? How does each generation or group of leaders pick its successors? How does it recruit, train, motivate, utilize, reward, and retain the volunteers who "sell" Jewish philanthropy?

A series of unconnected adventure stories such as those Goldin tells does not go very far toward explaining the inner world of American Jewish philanthropy. Continuity, so very difficult to maintain, requires not only survival but the constant winning of new adherents, evaluation of those already won, encouragement of new members to learn about the organizations and causes served, reduction of conflict, instillment of a sense of guilt deep enough to impel people to work toward goals, provision of intangible rewards (publicity, honors, fellowship, prestige, and a sense of personal pride in accomplishing goals), and a deepened understanding of what it is that is being pursued. When all the heroic givers are offstage, successful fund raising is hard work, very hard work; the sweat and toil are what we need to know more about.

WHAT is also missing from Goldin's treatment is an answer to the question, *why* do these Jews give? The two reasons offered in the three paragraphs devoted to this subject—recognition, and a desire to preserve Jews and Judaism—are unsatisfactory. The first is an insult; the second, though closer to the truth, needs to be elaborated upon. As a sometime observer of advance-gift ($10,000-and-over) meetings in two American Jewish communities, I myself have been struck by an almost religious atmosphere of guilt-and-atonement that seems to characterize such meetings, and by the solemn statements of identification with the historic fate of the Jewish people that often accompany the making of pledges.

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The guilt is over having so much money and living so well, especially in the light of recent Jewish history; the note that is constantly struck is one of "were it not for a stroke of luck, I too might have been annihilated." The pledge is a means of assuaging the guilt, but also of acknowledging and simultaneously overcoming (for a moment) the deeply felt vulnerability of the Jewish position in the world. The vocabulary of contribution, the symbols of transcendent purpose that are invoked in fund raising speeches, all return to these themes. UJA, Israel Bond dinners, and the rest may have become, as Goldin says, the "cornerstone around which Jewish life is organized" in the United States; but whatever else one may wish to say about them, they represent a genuine expression of unbreakable identification with the Jewish community, and a determination that its material welfare (from which all else follows) will continue to be provided for unto the coming generations.

Japan in the World

THE JAPANESE. By EDWIN O. REISCHAUER. *Harvard University Press. 443 pp. $15.00.*

Reviewed by CHARLES HORNER

"SOMEONE has calculated," Edwin O. Reischauer writes, "that, whereas in 1934, there were only thirteen scholars in the United States capable of making substantial use of the Japanese language, by 1969 there were five hundred." Reischauer was probably one of those first thirteen; certainly he has been instrumental in expanding the number ever since. Born and reared in Japan (the son of Presbyterian missionaries), a pioneer in the establishment of Asian studies in America and now University Professor at Harvard, co-author —with Harvard colleague John K. Fairbank—of a widely-used text in East Asian history, Reischauer is clearly the "dean" of Japanese studies in this country. As U.S. ambassador in Tokyo (1961-66), he can speak with equal authority about contemporary Japan and about U.S. policies toward it.

Yet if one wishes to understand the character of his latest book—a lengthy distillation of a lifetime's study of a formidable people—one must also remember that Reischauer is a highly respected figure in Japan itself. It may be too much to say that as a foreign commentator on Japanese life he enjoys a position analogous to such great foreign students of America as de Tocqueville and Bryce, but it is not too far-fetched to think that the Japanese may regard him in this way. At the least, the Japanese take seriously anything Reischauer has to say about them and to them. And because the Japanese-American relationship remains central in holding today's world together, we ought to know how the Japanese

CHARLES HORNER, *a new contributor, is Special Assistant to U.S. Senator Daniel P. Moynihan.*

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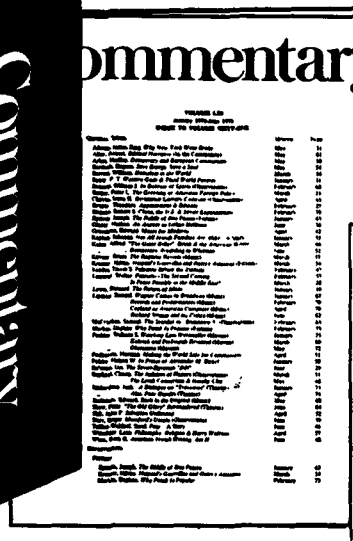

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are being instructed to think—especially about their own role in the world.

About a quarter of the book is given over to historical summary, the rest to a discussion of individual and national characteristics as they are reflected in Japanese business, politics, social relations, and, of great importance to Reischauer, in Japan's sense of itself. (He comments not at all on modern Japanese cultural, especially literary, achievements, in part perhaps because the modern Japanese novel must be profoundly offensive to a good Presbyterian, but also because the sensibility displayed in modern Japanese writing seems hardly to illustrate the "coherence" and good mental order Reischauer finds in Japan.) What Reischauer seeks to explain is why Japan succeeded early in this century in becoming the only non-white, non-Christian, industrial and military power, how it so rapidly succeeded in restoring its economic position after its total defeat in World War II, and how, alone among the nations of the Third World (using the term here in its strictly geographic sense), Japan has maintained a spectacularly productive economy and a spirited parliamentary democracy.

Reischauer isolates a number of factors which seem to him to have predisposed Japan to success in the modern world. Japan's prominence was achieved, according to him, not by discarding tradition, but by making use of it in positive, even ingenious, ways, so that modern Japan must be seen not as the product of revolutionary changes in traditional culture, but as an almost natural unfolding of preexisting tendencies. Although the West provided a critical stimulus, the Japanese took from it only so much as was necessary to defend themselves from total envelopment in, or destruction by, a Western world nearing the height of its own expansive dynamism, a West which had already humbled China when —in the person of Commodore Perry—it forcibly "opened" Japan in the mid-19th century.

When he comes to Japan's contemporary situation, Reischauer focuses on a central dilemma which in some ways arises from that country's peculiar relation to the West. Of the world's major states, Japan is the most vulnerable to global disorders and upsets; it is wholly dependent on imported raw materials and petroleum, and can pay for these things only by trade. Yet while it is the most "interdependent" of the industrial democracies, Japan is also the least appropriately equipped to participate in international politics. Japan's sense of "separateness"—which is itself the product of the country's insular history, its racial homogeneity, its excruciatingly difficult writing system, and the lack of flair for the study of foreign languages—has rendered it incapable of assuming its proper role in world affairs. Reischauer lectures the Japanese on the importance of taking greater initiatives in the international arena, suggests that both their history and their present condition give them a basis for doing so, and even explains, at some length, how they can improve upon their teaching of English.

But there may be another explanation for Japanese reticence on the world scene. Japan has no real power base, other than the power of its good example. Having lost a rather desperate gamble for "self-sufficiency" in the 1940's, Japan was incorporated into the American-designed postwar system. The United States is now Japan's power base, and whatever political—as distinct from economic—influence Japan has in the world derives from that circumstance. Even Japan's foreign policy has been taken over by the U.S. Surely the fact that we function as the *de facto* foreign ministry of Japan defines the limits of Japan's participation in the world system, even as it determines the solidity of the Japanese-American connection.

Reischauer proposes that the Japanese play a more assertive role, yet we can scarcely expect them to be more royalist than the king when it comes to advancing or protecting the interests of the industrial democracies. Indeed, borrowing Donald Hellman's characterization of Japan as "half a nation" (because of its essentially non-existent military capabilities), we may say that any Japanese foreign policy will be half that of the United States. If one shares Reischauer's concern that the missing half not be supplied in the form of a massive Japanese military build-up, it would seem that little less than continued and unambiguous American leadership can propel Japan into a greater international role. Reischauer's advocacy of more efficient English instruction, and his promotion of the Japan-based United Nations University, are no doubt worthy in their way, but other ways must be found if we are serious about involving Japan more deeply in world affairs. Would not the Japanese be right to regard prescriptions like Reischauer's as but further evidence of America's decline as an Asian, if not a world, power?

Still, this book will have served a useful purpose if it succeeds in focusing attention on the importance of Japan to the United States. An American public once obsessed with the specter of China's export of revolution now directs its attention to Japan's export of color television sets. A government once under intense political pressure to resist China (totalitarian) now finds itself pressured to resist Japan (incorporated). By ruling that surplus Alaskan crude oil will not be sold to the Japanese, the American government once again underscores Japan's vulnerability to Third World resource exporters—and reassures the Japanese that in the final analysis they have no one to turn to except the Arabs.

What are the Japanese, who appreciate the symbolic content of politics, supposed to conclude from this? Thirty years ago the U.S. sent them Douglas MacArthur; for better or worse, the America he represented was an Asian power. Today, the U.S. sends as its ambassador the former majority leader of the Senate, a man known above all as a tenacious opponent of American power in Asia (though admittedly his opposition to continued American power in Europe was even greater). One can only wonder how Ambassador Mansfield will present the case that former Ambassador Reischauer has developed.

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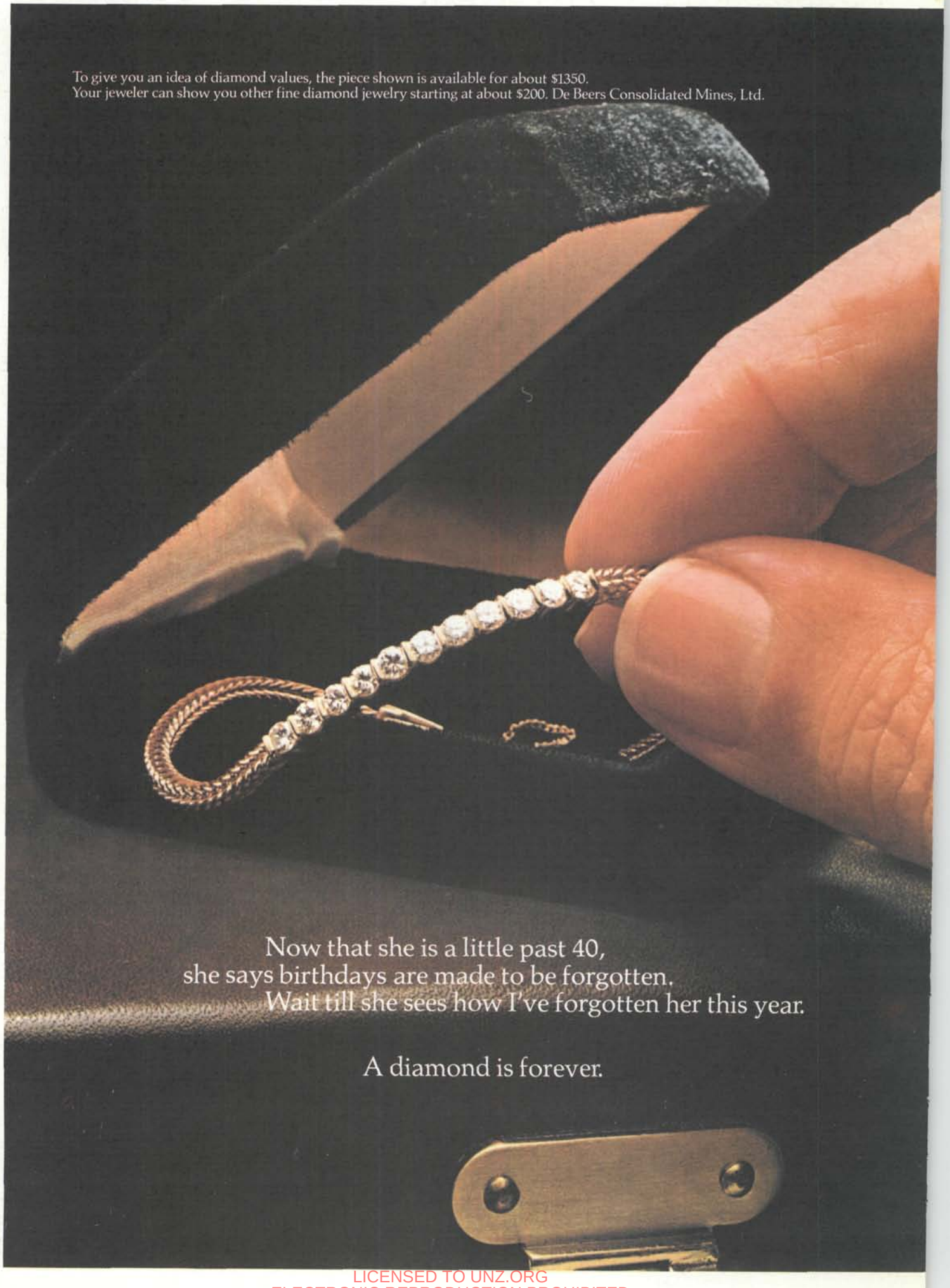
To give you an idea of diamond values, the piece shown is available for about $1350.
Your jeweler can show you other fine diamond jewelry starting at about $200. De Beers Consolidated Mines, Ltd.
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she says birthdays are made to be forgotten.
Wait till she sees how I've forgotten her this year.
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